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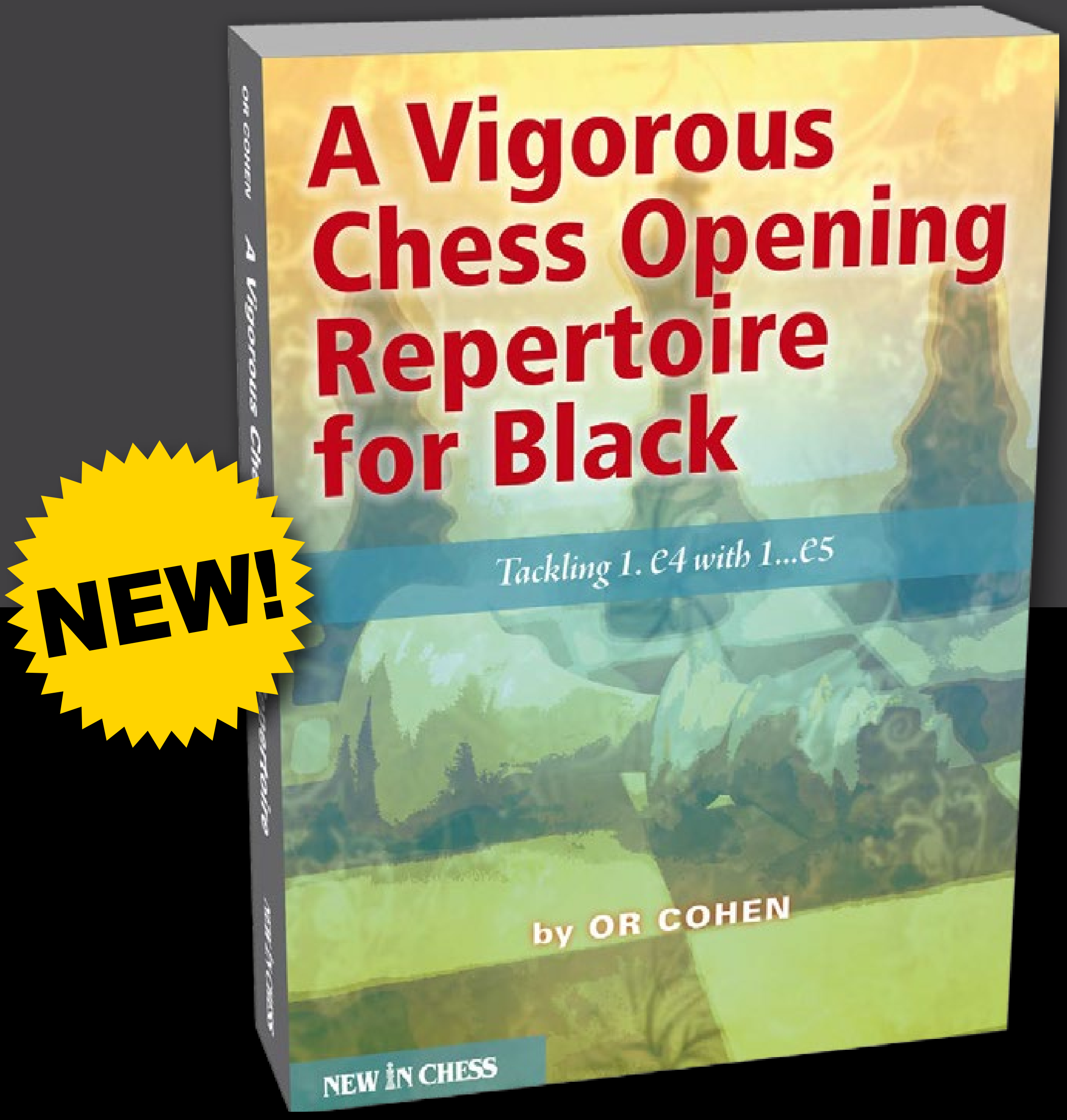
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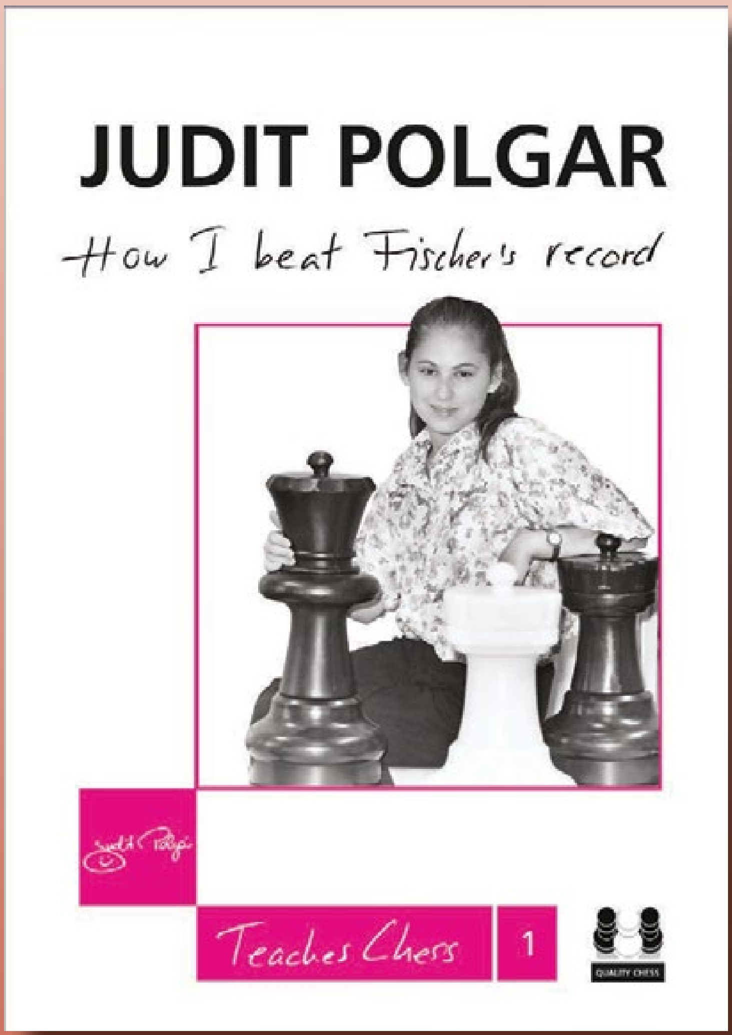
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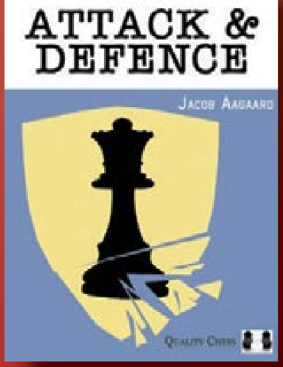
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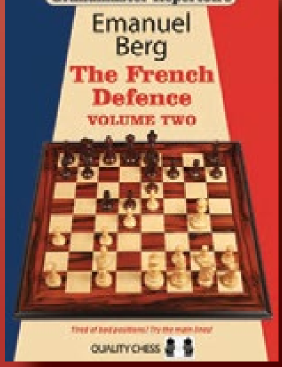
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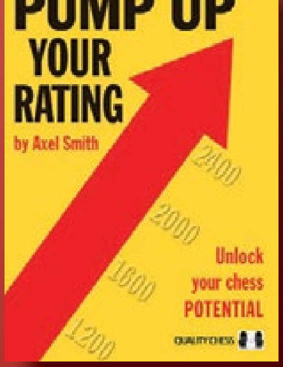
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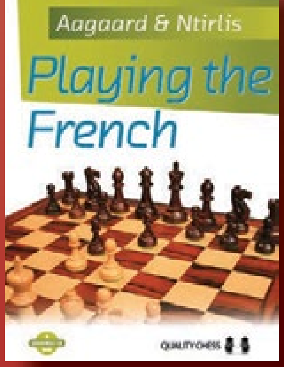
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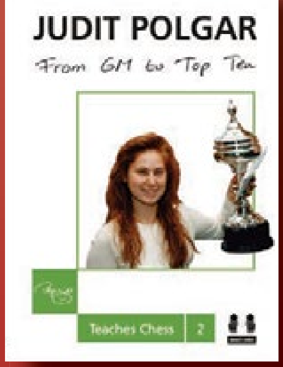
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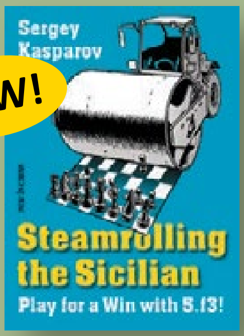
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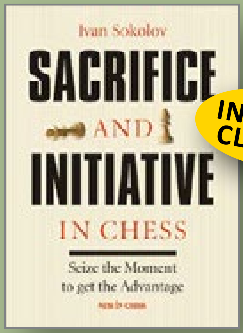
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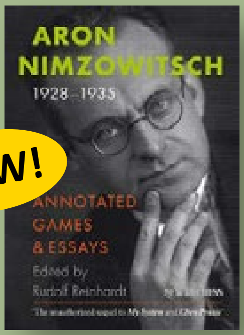
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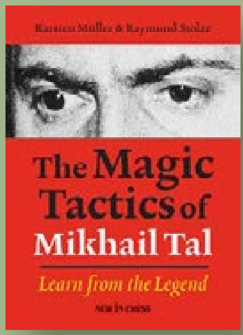
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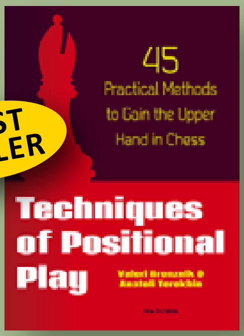
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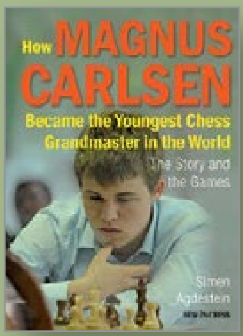
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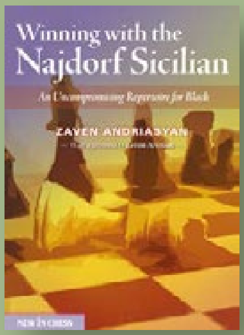
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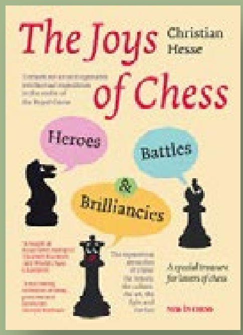
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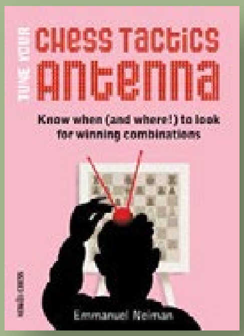
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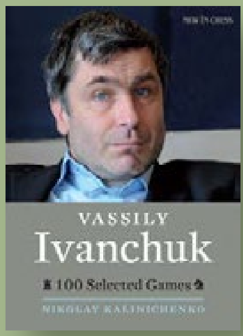
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2013 Issue **8**

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Eight days before his 23rd birthday, Magnus Carlsen won 'the last big title' that was still lacking. In Chennai, Vishy Anand's home-town, the Norwegian only needed ten games to prove that he is not only the world's number one, but that he also deserves to be the World Champion.

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Beware: Brilliancy!

'At home it is very nice now. Akhil has no clue what has happened. He still wants his book read to him, still wants you to play with him. It's like suddenly you are dealing with something else, completely different from all the other interactions you have. It's nice and very healing.' – Vishy Anand

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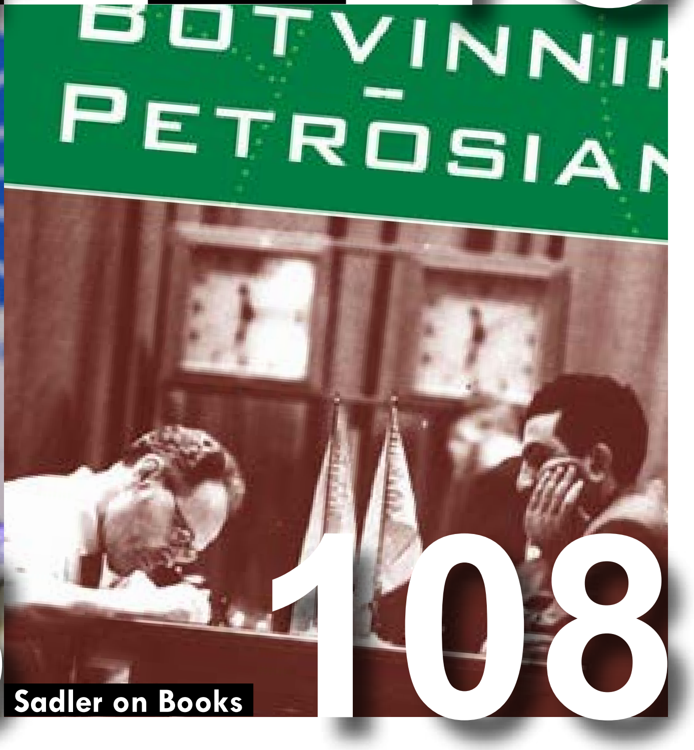

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Reading a message

En route for a promotional tour of the Far East, Garry Kasparov paid a visit to the World Championship match in Chennai. Although he knew that he couldn't expect a warm welcome from the All Indian Chess Federation, which has close ties with current FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, the candidate for the 2014 presidential elections at the Olympiad in Tromsø could hardly have imagined the reception he met with. Neither the AICF nor FIDE deigned to receive him. Instead, the 13th World Champion was denied access to the press room and all other rooms related to the match. The online commentators were told that they would be sacked if he appeared in the live broadcast.

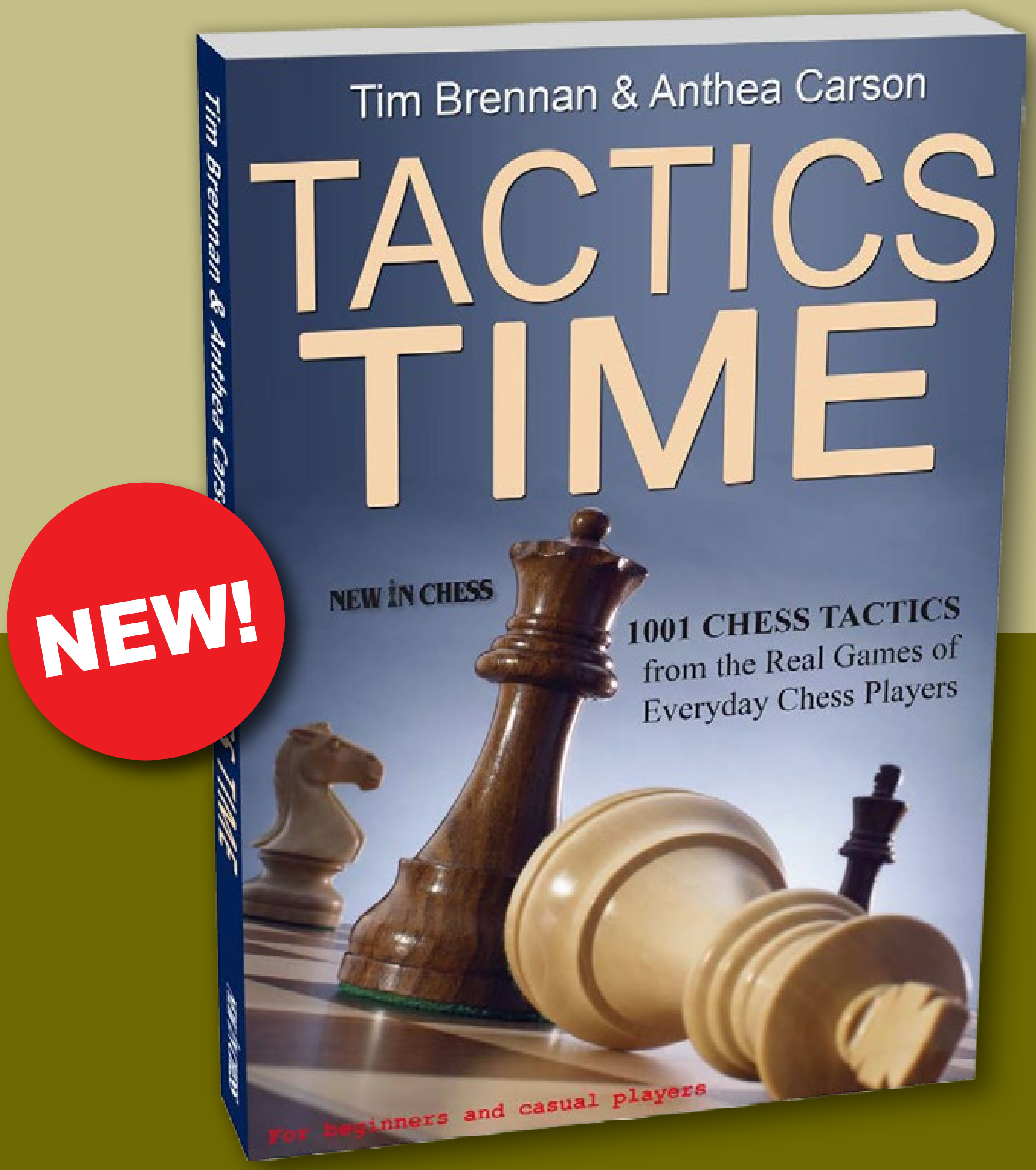
The disrespectful treatment of Kasparov sparked indignant reactions amongst the press corps, but there were also Indian journalists who made it clear that they didn't understand why he had come here in the first place. In India, Kasparov's attitude towards Vishy Anand has been interpreted in recent years as hostile and condescending. Many felt particularly uncomfortable about his press conference at the Anand-Gelfand match in Moscow, where he stated that for the first time in the history of chess the strongest player around did not take part.

In the end, officials of the AICF did meet with Kasparov, while FIDE vice-President Giorgios Makropoulos addressed the issue in a meeting with the press. An agitated 'Makro' blamed the journalists for making a mountain out of a molehill. Apparently, they had nothing to write about after the first two boring games. And in a funny twist-around of reality he declared that FIDE *had* received Kasparov; they had sent their Secretary Ignatius Leong to meet him at the airport! Good FIDE humour, as Leong has changed sides and is on Kasparov's ticket for the coming elections.

Kasparov underwent everything with dignified calm, having no wish to be at the centre of a scandal. Instead he preferred to follow the match with great interest. In between he withdrew to the Chinese restaurant of the Hyatt Regency to have a meal and check his email.

ERIC VAN REEM

Amateur games are usually won by rather primitive means ...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With Lasker I shared a drink

In New In Chess 2013/7, p.127, Hans Ree makes Hannak contradict Hannak. But one quote refers to the 1894 Lasker-Steinitz match, and the other to the 1896 match.

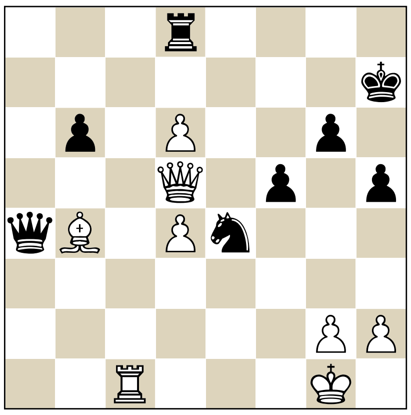
My personal connection to Steinitz is having conversed with a man who had conversed with Steinitz – attorney and chess official Harold M. Phillips.

With Lasker I shared a drink. Alas, it was not Emanuel, but Edward.

Anthony Saidy
Los Angeles, CA, USA

Morphy's mate?

In New In Chess 2013/7, on page 55, you show a position from Tomashevsky-Morozevich, Tromsø 2013.



35.♕f7+? 35.♕b7+ and taking on b6 maintains the balance. **35...♔h6 36.♕e7?** Tomashevsky has lost his head, but it wasn't so easy. **36...♕xb4** 0-1 37.♕xd8 ♕xd4+ is mate.

To me with my very modest abilities this mate was not immediately clear, but after some thinking I realized the author must mean the sequence leading to a smothered mate: 38.♔h1 ♘f2+ 39.♔g1 ♘h3++ 40.♔h1 ♕g1+ 41.♖xg1 ♘f2 checkmate. Of course even I had seen this idea many times before and I connect it with Paul Morphy. And so my question is: is this mate called 'Morphy's mate'? Or if it isn't, shouldn't we start calling it that?!

Ronald van Vollenhoven
Enebyberg, Sweden

Editorial postscript:

Although this mate occurred in several of Paul Morphy's games and we welcome any tribute to the great American, this smothered mate is known as Philidor's legacy. Which doesn't mean that it was invented by Philidor. As the wonderful *Oxford Companion to Chess* explains this mate was called 'A Clever Legacy' by Thomas Pruen in his *History and Study of Chess* (1804) which also included Philidor's text. Next, Hoyle, in his *Treatise on Chess* (1808) erroneously named it 'Philidor's Legacy'. In fact, this kind of mate was already given by Lucena in 1497 in the oldest existing printed book on chess, *Repeticion de Amores y Arte de Ajedrez con 101 Juegos de Partido*.

Write to us

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Letters may be edited or abridged

Cuba's first grandmaster

I recently read an article in New In Chess 2013/6 called 'Che and Chess' by Adam Feinstein. In that article, the author made the statement that 'In 1975 Cuba's first grandmaster Silvino Garcia dedicated his title to Che'.

This statement is so ridiculous that it is beyond comprehension. I cannot understand how the author could be so uneducated as to write that statement, and I cannot understand how your editorial staff could be so uneducated as to let that statement slip by your review. Have any of you ever heard of Jose Capablanca?

John DiLucci
Irving, TX, USA

Editorial postscript:

Of course Adam Feinstein knows Capablanca (he wrote a fine article on him in New In Chess 2012/3) and so do we. When in 1950 FIDE officially introduced the grandmaster title and set rules how to obtain the title, they gave 27 players the title because of results achieved. These were 15 top players of the day starting with World Champion Botvinnik, and 12 players, such as Rubinstein and Tartakower, who in 1950 were past their prime but were recognized as having been of world class. And who were still alive. As a result one of the greatest players of all time (as you know, Capa died in 1942) was 'officially' never a grandmaster and the first official Cuban grandmaster was indeed Silvino Garcia.

Cover confusion

Congratulations for another outstanding issue, New In Chess 2013/7, the Anand-Carlsen Bumper Issue.

Alas, I do have one complaint, that being the fact that GM Magnus Carlsen is on the cover – which may be surprising for you to read. If this issue featuring the run up to the Anand-Carlsen match was more balanced, then should not both Anand and Carlsen have appeared on the cover?

However, more seriously, it would seem to me that the most significant achievement that occurred in the chess world during the time period covered in this issue NIC 2013/7, was the victory of Vladimir Kramnik in the Tromsø World Cup, and so in my opinion he should have been on the cover.

(By the way, I do wish to applaud GM Simen Agdestein for his high quality article on the Tromsø World Cup.)

Normally NIC seems to avoid having the same player appear on the cover of consecutive issues. So, given that Carlsen is likely to defeat Anand, (and in fact has just done so!), and become the new world champion, will he not be most deserving of being on the cover of the future NIC 2013/8, so why did you have to place him on the cover of issue 2013/7?

Don Renshaw
Avon, MN, USA

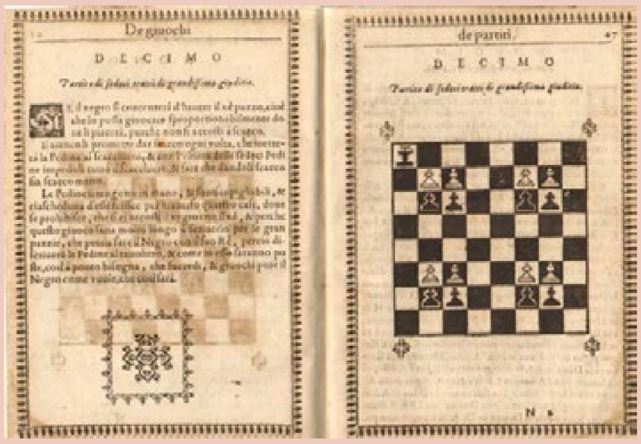
Editorial postscript:

You are absolutely right that Vladimir Kramnik was a perfect candidate to grace our previous cover, but we decided differently. By now you will have seen who's on the cover this time...

How big is your shelf?

With the death of Lothar Schmid at the age of 85 on May 18th of this year, German chess lost one of its greatest personalities. Not only was he a strong grandmaster who represented his country at 11 Olympiads and had the scalps of luminaries such as Bogoljubow, Keres and Larsen under his belt, Schmid was also a respected International Arbiter, who led the Match of the Century between Spassky and Fischer in Reykjavik in 1972. And last but certainly not least, Schmid, who was co-owner of the Karl May publishing house in Bamberg, had the largest private chess library in the world.

Already during his life speculation was rife about what would happen with his collection after his death, as its size baffles the imagination. Apart from many thousands of books, from the very first chess publications to modern editions, there are manuscripts, autographs and what not. The total number of books in the Schmid chess collection is said to be around 50,000. So what will happen with his library? To begin with, on November 23rd, the Klittich-Pfankuch auction house in Braunschweig auctioned around 950 doubles (mind you, these are not part of the collection just mentioned, they are 'only' duplicates). Around 50 collectors attended the auction, while at least twice this number sent in their bids in writing. The hammer price total of the sale was about €176,000, an amount that doesn't include the 20 per cent auction costs that the successful bidders have to pay and an additional seven per cent tax.


Two pages from the oldest book in the auction, a Gianutio (1597) that fetched €5,000.

Most of the money was brought in by the star lots: 10 per cent of the books, which accounted for approximately half of the total amount. Among the highlights were the first French Ruy Lopez edition published in 1615, which fetched €7,200, a Carrera (1617, €5,400), a Gianutio (1597, €5,000) and a variant first edition Philidor (1749, €3,500).

And what about the real collection? The Schmid family would prefer the library to remain intact, but realizes that a prospective buyer not only needs a fat wallet, but also a lot of space. The 50,000 books, after all, cover 750 metres of shelves.

Karpov honours Karpov

Have you ever seen *The Two Lives of Mattia Pascal*, a 1985 Italian movie starring Marcello Mastroianni? Or read Luigi Pirandello's novella that the film was based on? If you have, you will no doubt remember the scene in which the protagonist witnesses his own funeral (his family believes they are burying him, which is not the case). What a great find that was, to let someone watch and listen to his closest family and friends while they believe he is no longer among them.

The comparison is definitely flawed, but this was a scene that a movie buff at the Café remembered when we heard about the Trophée Anatoly Karpov in Cap d'Agde, a rapid tournament with eight players: four women and four men, one of them being... Anatoly Karpov! At 62, Karpov was easily the oldest participant, but that didn't show at all! Playing like a young god the 12th World Champion won the preliminary double round-robin, scoring 11 out of 14. Without losing a single game, he left Bacrot (9 points), Ivanchuk (8), Pelletier (8), Mariya Muzychuk (8), Sebag (7½), Zhao Xue (4½) and Maisuradze (½) gasping for breath.

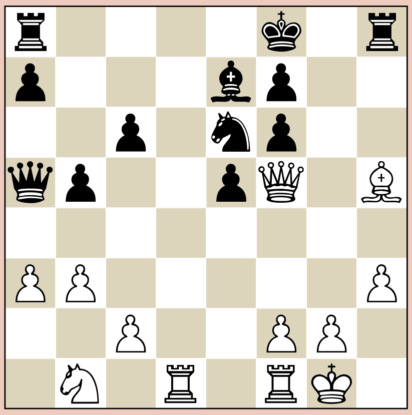
The tournament was decided in a knock-out phase and Karpov only failed to pay tribute to himself when he stumbled in the final. Having drawn both rapid games against Etienne Bacrot, Karpov showed that he was only human in the blitz play-off. In the first game he blundered in a winning position, the second game he lost on time when once again he was totally winning.

Anatoly Karpov: Like a good wine...

Here's a clever psychological game against Vassily Ivanchuk.

SD 8.9 – B01
Vassily Ivanchuk
Anatoly Karpov
Cap d'Agde Karpov Trophy 2013

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♕xd5 3.♘c3 ♕d6 4.d4 c6 5.♘f3 ♗g4 6.h3 ♗xf3 7.♕xf3 ♕xd4 8.♗f4 8.♗e3 looks more concrete. **8...e5 9.♗g5 ♗e7 10.♖d1 ♕b6 11.♗c4 ♘f6 12.♗xf6 gxf6 13.♕f5 ♘a6** Black's position seems to be hanging by a thread, but as long as there is no direct win... **14.0-0** Black wouldn't mind 14.♕d7+ ♔f8. **14...♘c5 15.b3 h5 16.a3 ♕a5 17.♘b1 b5 18.♗e2 ♘e6 19.♗xh5 ♔f8**

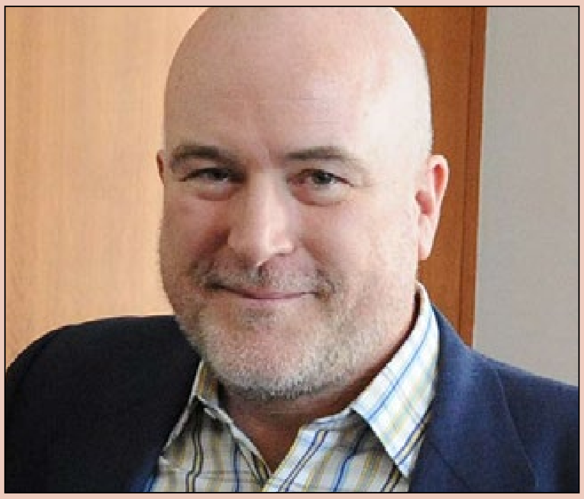


With the knight coming to d4 and the open files against the white king, Black has good compensation for the pawn. Ah, and he also has a concrete threat. **20.c3? ♘g7** That's a piece. White resigned.

Another candidate?

So what happened to Andrew Paulson, the flamboyant entrepreneur whose company AGON acquired the rights for the FIDE World Championship cycle? Or what happened to AGON, for that matter? Do they still have these rights? And how would we find out? In any case their logo was no longer seen at the final FIDE Grand Prix tournaments of the 2012-13 cycle and it didn't feature at the World Championship match either. On the other hand, Anand and Carlsen did play with the pieces that were introduced at the London Candidates' tournament. And Paulson was in Chennai, too. In fact, he had been in India for several months, talking to numerous companies, trying to convince them of the great potential of chess.

Does that mean that he hasn't left chess for good to try his luck elsewhere, as many believed after his failure to find sponsorship for the Grand Prix? No, he hasn't, not at all. In fact, he recently ran for the presidency of the English Chess Federation and he won. What did he do that for? A big profile in *The New York Times* that appeared one day after Magnus Carlsen became the new World Champion, reached an unambiguous conclusion: Paulson wants to run for FIDE president.


NEW IN CHESS

President of the English Chess Association Andrew Paulson. What will be his next step?

Is that so? When we met him in Chennai, Andrew Paulson denied with a broad smile that this was his plan. But he acknowledged that he is opposed to Ilyumzhinov's presidency and that he is still working for chess fulltime. His dreams and vision remain unchanged and he is convinced that the future of chess is bright and that he will be part of it. The coming months, he promised, will reveal more about his ambitions and plans.

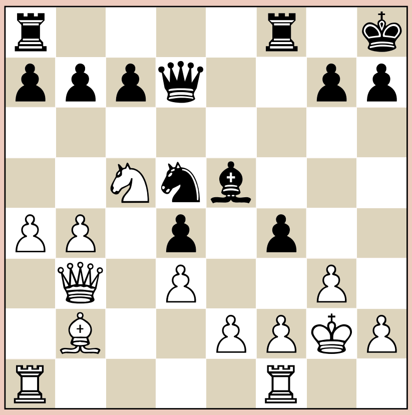
Azerbaijan pulls it off

Whatever you may think of the state chess is in, there certainly is no shortage of tournaments. Sometimes it's close to confusing, particularly if many of the same players are involved. Barely had the European Club Cup finished or the European Team Championships started and, as if that was not enough, as we are about to go to press the World Teams has just got underway.

NEW IN CHESS

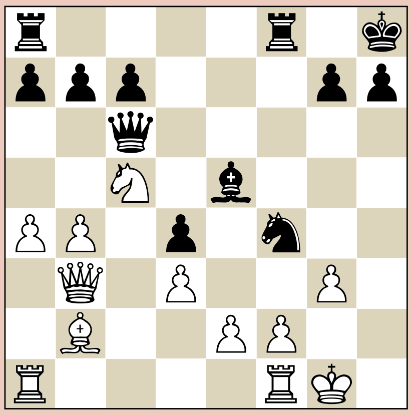
Shakhriyar Mamedyarov knows an attack when he sees one.

The European Teams ended in a great success for Azerbaijan. What the elite team of SOCAR failed to do in Rhodes (see David Navara's report in this issue), the Azeri national team pulled off in Warsaw. Led by Shakhriyar Mamedyarov, Azerbaijan finished ahead of France and Russia. Not for the first time in recent history Russia was the top-seed (average rating 2747, players: Grischuk, Svidler, Andreikin, Morozevich, Tomashevsky) and not for the first time they failed to win. In the end, Azerbaijan, which further consisted of Radjabov, Safarli, Mamedov and Guseinov, was the only team not to lose a single match, and this consistency made the difference. Here's how Mamedyarov finished off his game against Poland's Socko.



Socko-Mamedyarov
position after 21.♘c5

A knight jump that forces the queen to a better square. **21...♕c6 22.♔g1** Returning the knight to e4 was objectively best, but would feel like a loss of tempo. **22...fxg3 23.hxg3 ♘f4!**



Now it's party time for Black. **24.♘e4** As 24.gxf4 ♕g6+ leads to a quick mate. **24...♘xe2+ 25.♔g2 ♕g6 26.♖ae1 ♕h5 27.f4 ♘xf4+** The kind of violence you can expect. **28.gxf4 ♗xf4 29.♘g3 ♕g5** Everything wins. **30.♖xf4 ♕xf4 31.♖e2 ♕f3+ 32.♔h2 ♖f4 33.♖g2 ♖h4+ 34.♔g1 ♕e3+** White resigned. ■

Magnus Carlsen's Perfect Ten

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

Barring a scare in London, Magnus Carlsen's road to Chennai hadn't been too bumpy. Now, having arrived in the city of Vishy Anand, he shouldn't expect an easy walk, as World Championship matches have their own rules. That's what he was told and maybe he heard it. But once again the Norwegian went his own way and having 'settled in' he left Anand not a single chance, won three games and decided the match two rounds before the end, 6½-3½.

NEW IN CHESS

The moment he had been waiting for. Magnus Carlsen is handed the World Championship trophy by Tamil Nadu's Chief Minister Jayalalithaa Jayaram and FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov.

Carlsen's victory was reminiscent of Bobby Fischer. With ferocious willpower and barely trusting any outside help he took the title that he felt was his and made headlines all over the world. Like the American he promised to be an active champion, play tournaments, defend his crown and seek new challenges.

In chess-crazy Norway there's a fervent wish that he will keep his word, and they are not alone.

On arriving at the Hyatt Regency it didn't take me long to feel that the hotel had warmly embraced the World Championship match that was being contested in the Ballroom on the ground floor. At the reception, the staff members that took guests that had come for the match to their rooms were even dressed as chess pieces. In their rooms, they were extended a further welcome in the form of a cake shaped like a chessboard with a chocolate king and queen on top. To be honest, the costumes were a bit silly, but the young man that received me wore it with a dignity and naturalness as if he had never worn anything else.

In the imposing atrium, banners announced the War of the Wizards. As I arrived after Game 6, I couldn't help but think that Carlsen seemed to have taken a decisive lead with his endgame wizardry, while Anand was desperately searching for a magic wand to change the course of the match.

I had already seen the first signs of the match during the taxi ride from the airport to the hotel. Everywhere along the road, there were countless billboards and posters with the portrait of Tamil Nadu's Chief Minister Jayalalithaa Jayaram, a popular former movie star who is mostly described affectionately as 'Amma', mother. Many of the posters referred to the chess match and thanked 'Amma', often portrayed with a chess piece in her hand, profusely for providing the money for the event with texts like 'You are always our Champion' and 'You are not only our king and queen, but also our knight and bishop and rook'.

The interest in the match between the Norwegian phenomenon and their star Anand was phenomenal. All games were broadcast live on Indian television, and all newspapers dedicated at least one page per day to the world championship. The big ones, with millions of readers, had sent three or four journalists to Chennai and they impressed with the wide variety of subjects they touched on and with their knowledgeable reports and informative background interviews. They also regularly asked chess professionals like Ian Rogers and Parimarjan Negi to give their take on the proceedings as columnists. The overall approach was admirably neutral, although any criticism of Anand was almost always clad in caution and respect.

> 'A World Championship match is like a child, you never know how it will grow up.'

It would be interesting to make a closer comparative study between the coverage in the Indian newspapers and the way the Norwegian press went wild about their national hero. In Norway, the attention lavished on the match was totally unprecedented, but here the emphasis was more on the matters extraneous to the match – Carlsen's phenomenal successes, his results, his international fame and the delight of the entire country that one of them had accomplished all this. But in Norway, too, the games were broadcast in full on television and the talk show around the live games was a huge success. The Norwegians were so fascinated by the match that during the games the streets often looked deserted. At some point the biggest bank in the country, DNB, had to block their employees' Internet access to the match, as they were unacceptably slowing down the network.

Inauguration of
FIDE WORLD CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH - 2
by
Puratchi Thalaivi
Selvi J JAYALALITH
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil
2013 Thursd

LENNART OOTES

At the opening ceremony Kirsan Ilyumzhinov presented Jayalalithaa Jayaram with a painting by Russian modern impressionist Yuri Krotov of the Anand-Gelfand match in Moscow. Don't worry, this was not the painting Andrei Filatov gave to Anand, but a new identical one, commissioned from the artist.

NEW IN CHESS

The atrium of the Hyatt Regency was not the worst place to follow the games. The match attracted fans from all over India.

It wasn't only in India and Norway that the match stirred up an interest in chess that we hadn't seen in some time. Although only a small number of leading newspapers from other countries had a reporter in Chennai (*El Pais* and *El Mundo* from Spain, *Die Zeit* and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* from Germany, *Politiken* from Denmark), Carlsen's quest for the crown was covered all around the globe.

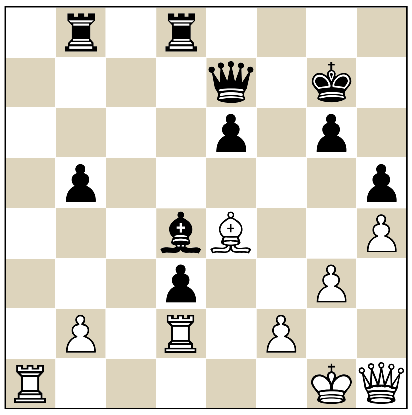
The huge interest at the venue also caused logistical problems, as the press room was barely big enough to accommodate everyone. The photographers were not to be envied. As they could only take photographs in the playing room through the glass wall that separated the stage from the audience, their possibilities were sadly reduced and the daily scrimmages to get some decent shots were a recurring nuisance. In addition, two glass panes met exactly in the middle of the glass wall, adding an annoying line to many a photo. These were details that detracted from an otherwise smoothly run event.

Another missed opportunity was highlighted by Garry Kasparov's visit. The cold shoulder extended to the 13th World Champion not only spoke volumes about the campaign we can expect in the FIDE presidential elections next summer, it also made one think that there was a dearth of honorary guests. Traditionally, World Championship matches bring together chess celebrities from past and present, but this time no former champions had been invited. In this sense the organizers might have drawn some inspiration from the previous match in Moscow last year, where numerous stars dropped by and an array of world class players provided expert commentary. Perhaps they were reluctant to send out such invitations, fearing the additional paperwork. A widespread complaint, or rather feeling of disbelief, among the foreign journalists was the complexity of obtaining a visa. The Indians' love for bureaucracy borders on the absurd and everyone had his own horror story to tell.

Fortunately, these discomforts were quickly forgotten (at least temporarily) once you were surrounded by the friendliness and warm hospitality from everyone you met and the truly wonderful service at the Hyatt Regency.

On the eve of the match in Chennai I had a talk with Vladimir Kramnik about his expectations. The former World Champion said what many felt, stressing that 'obviously Magnus is the clear favourite'; but he also poetically pointed at the unpredictability of such matches: 'A World Championship match is like a child, you never know how it will grow up.'

And indeed, few people had expected that the match would start as it started. With Carlsen having white in the first game a prolonged fight seemed to be on the cards, an appetizer for things to come. No doubt the Norwegian would go for a long game, and if needed press till deep in the endgame. Not really. After one and a half hours and a mere 16 moves the draw was a fact. The second game was barely more inspiring, lasting only 25 moves and little over an hour. Carlsen looked nervous at the press conferences or at least lacked his normal self-confidence and composure, while Anand seemed relaxed. Was the match indeed taking an unexpected course? It seemed so in Game 3, when Carlsen again obtained nothing with White. He even got into trouble and was lucky that Anand didn't grab his chances. The first moment is indicated by Sergey Shipov in his résumé further on in this issue, the second one was shown by Garry Kasparov, who followed the game in Chennai.



Carlsen-Anand
Chennai 2013 (3)
position after 33.♖d2

In this position Anand quickly played: **33...♕b4** Instead, as Kasparov showed, he could have gone 33...♖f8 34.♗xd3 ♕d6 – the point. The queen not only eyes the g3-pawn, but is also

Magnus Carlsen and the people behind him: Magnus Forssell (cook), Brede Kvisvik (doctor), Espen Agdestein (manager), Henrik Carlsen (father) and Björn Gunnar Nesse ('body guard').

COURTESY VG

interested in the bishop on d3. After 35.♕g2 ♖xf2 36.♖xf2 ♖f8 37.♖f1 ♖xf2 38.♖xf2 ♗xf2+ 39.♕xf2 ♕xd3 Black would have an endgame a pawn up that, with optimum play, ought to be winning. **34.♖ad1 ♗xb2** It was still possible to play 34...♖f8 and go for this queen ending. **35.♕f3** Carlsen brings his queen into play again and the danger is gone. Five moves on Anand offered a draw, but although the position was equal (and the game was drawn on move 51), Carlsen played on, showing a first glimpse of his usual persistence.

Game 3 was a turning point. As Carlsen put it: 'From that moment on I settled in and stopped worrying about the occasion and started playing well, like I usually do. That worked out pretty well.'

The match came alive in Game 4, a brilliant effort from both sides. Defending with the Berlin Wall, Carlsen obtained the initiative with remarkable ease and reached a promising position. The play got very sharp and in this phase Anand conducted an inspired defence that led to a rook ending that was drawn after 64 moves. The players were praised and on the second rest day the press could speculate about the next games. The tight match that many had predicted and perhaps also had hoped for seemed to be in the making.

Seemed to be. Two days and two losses for Anand later the match was essentially over. Anand's loss in Game 5 was traumatic, as he explains in the interview in this issue. But Game 6 must have been hardly less painful, given the dramatic effect it had on the score. Carlsen admitted that he, too, believed that the game was steering for a draw, but he had 'one little trap'. And Anand fell for it.

In the next two games Anand's approach puzzled more or less everybody. Having another White in Game 7 (according to the rules halfway through the match the alternating of the colours was reversed) the general opinion was that he should avoid the Berlin and play 1.d4. But he didn't and Carlsen made an easy draw 'which suited him fine'. Game 8 caused further confusion. Instead of squaring up for a sharp fight in a Sicilian, Anand opted for a Berlin Defence that allowed Carlsen to choose an utterly boring line that indeed led to a draw.

In the meantime the mood at the press conferences had undergone a clear change. While Anand found it harder and harder to conceal his frustration, Carlsen often had to bite his tongue not to say the things that no doubt popped up in his mind. He knew the match was over, but didn't want to sound triumphant before the moment was really there. Yet he couldn't stop himself from commenting on one of the draws with the laconic 'I didn't want to think too much today, and as it was, I didn't have to.'

The last-ditch attempt that the Indians had been hoping for in Game 7 only came in Game 9. It had dramatic consequences when an optically brutal white attack ended in disaster. Carlsen's deeply calculated counterattack was enough for a draw, but Anand succumbed to the pressure and com-

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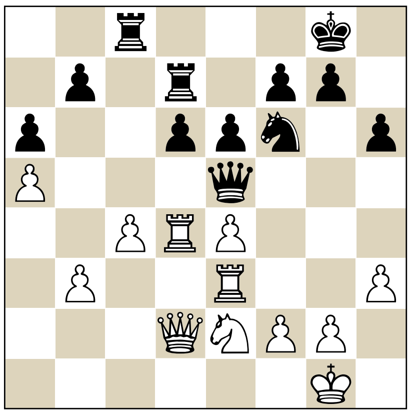
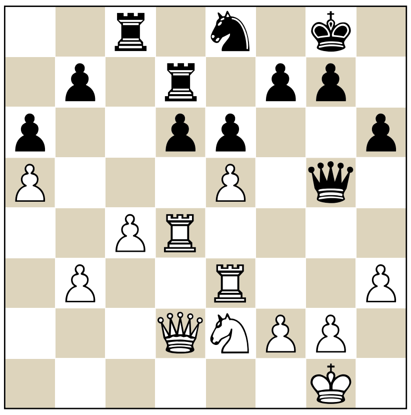
mitted a blunder that immediately lost the game. His resignation brought about an eruption of joy in the Norwegian VIP-room, where an elated group of sponsors and friends of the Carlsen family that had arrived for the last week were having the time of their lives.

As in Game 10 half a point as White sufficed for Carlsen to win 'the last big prize', there was a general understanding that the players had silently agreed to a brief draw to end Anand's suffering. But this wasn't the Norwegian's plan at all. He just wanted to play a normal game and see what happened. Which meant a full-blown struggle that only ended in a draw after close to five hours of play and 65 moves. Carlsen could have reached an even more dramatic score if he had been more alert when Anand committed a mistake.



Carlsen-Anand
Chennai 2013 (10)
position after 28.a5

28...♕g5? An error that allows White to exploit his pressure on the d-file. **29.e5! ♘e8**



30.exd6? Too rash and based on an oversight. Carlsen believed it was decisive. With the quiet 30.♘c3 White could have reached a winning position, as 30...♖c6 is met by a further strengthening move, 31.b4, after which the threat of ♘e4 will lead to material gain. **30...♖c6 31.f4 ♕d8** Now there is no way to keep the d6-pawn. **32.♖ed3 ♖cxd6 33.♖xd6 ♖xd6 34.♖xd6 ♕xd6 35.♕xd6 ♘xd6 36.♔f2** And White still had a slight pull, but it was not enough.

The end of the match led to a pandemonium rarely seen at chess events. Wherever Carlsen appeared he was besieged by photographers and journalists. It became a recurring image, starting at the post-game press conference and continuing till well after the prize-giving three days later.

Immediately after Game 10, both players appeared in the press room, although it was made clear that Anand would be spared and that he would leave after a couple of questions. The dethroned World Champion briefly gave his general view of the match and repeated that Game 5 had been a heavy blow. 'I had really hoped not to be afraid of him in long games but simply match him. This was not to be. After that it became worse and worse. I guess it never rains but it pours.' But he didn't only blame himself, he also praised Carlsen: 'It is fair enough to congratulate him. My mistakes did not happen by themselves. Clearly he managed to provoke them. Full credit to him.'

Before Anand left, Carlsen was asked to say a few words about his opponent, which he did with grace: 'Vishy's been World Champion for so long. One of the greatest of all time. I am honoured to have played a match with him. Of course, (I am) very very happy to have got the better of him. I really hope he will be back in the Candidates.'

And he had more nice things to say about his hosts: 'I have been treated very well here in India. I have been

Second or none

As per tradition, speculation about the teams of seconds of the players started well in advance of the World Championship match. Surprisingly, at the very first press conference Vishy Anand immediately put an end to all uncertainty. Or at least seemed to do so, as it cannot be excluded that there were further seconds who will remain anonymous. The World Champion revealed that he had four GMs working for him: Sandipan Chanda and Krishnan Sasikiran from India, and Peter Leko and Radek Wojtaszek from Hungary and Poland. These four had trained with him in Germany and they were with him in Chennai.

When Leko and Wojtaszek left the day after the last game, they told us that all during the match they had stayed on the floor booked for the Anand team, focusing on their work. With the exception of one break. After Game 7 they briefly went out to have dinner in a restaurant outside the hotel.

Magnus Carlsen was less forthcoming and declined to reveal any names. Only after the match was over did he thank his friend, Norwegian grandmaster Jon Ludvig Hammer, for all the work he had done. He mentioned 'other seconds' but did not want to say who they were. In one answer to a question on the subject he created the impression that Hammer might, in fact, have been the only person helping him. In light of Carlsen's idiosyncratic approach to chess, this is not so absurd an idea, but there were other 'answers' that seemed to contradict it. Among the candidates whispered about as possible further seconds of Carlsen were Laurent Fressinet and Pavel Eljanov. Perhaps their identities will remain secret forever, or perhaps there really weren't any.

Jon Ludvig Hammer created further confusion when he suddenly appeared in the atrium of the Hyatt Regency two days after Game 10. Had he been hiding in Chennai for several weeks? No, he hadn't. He had been working at home and been in touch with Carlsen via Skype and email. Once his boss had clinched the match, he had booked a ticket for a 13-hour flight to join the festivities in Chennai. It was a brief visit. Two days later he flew back to Oslo with the other Norwegians.

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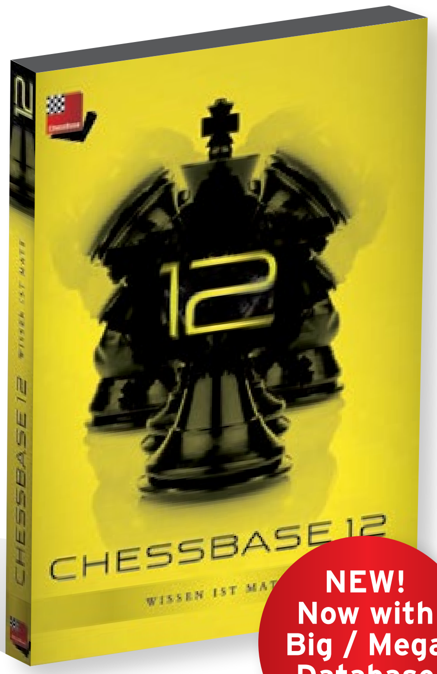

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made to feel very comfortable and in general at some point I started to settle in and got into my stride towards the end. I think it has been a great event. I am really honoured and happy to have won it.'

And he summed up what had decided the issue: 'He knew there were going to be fighting games. Basically Game 4 gave me a good feeling. I thought this was a really good fighting game. Although I did not manage to win it, I felt that I seized the initiative in the match and that he was as nervous and vulnerable as I was. I would like to take some responsibility for his mistakes. That's for sure. It's been like that for me for a long time. I just play and people crack under pressure. Even in the World Championship. That is what history shows. We have to keep on pushing. Obviously the blunders that he made, each of them are of course unique, but really this is what happens when you are put under pressure. That is what I really wanted to do in this match. Make him sit at the board and play for a long time.'

That's what he did and it worked. In a baffling manner. How was it possible that an absolute world class player like Vishy Anand didn't come close to winning even one game? And what more can we expect from Magnus Carlsen?

On the eve of the match I also spoke to Simen Agdestein, who worked with Carlsen in his formative years. He was nervous and said it would be a miracle if Magnus was going to win. Because it was hard to imagine that his restricted opening approach would be enough in a World Championship match. On the other hand, he also revealed his optimism when he said that a miracle could not be excluded as we have been seeing miracles for 13 years now.

With his win of the World Championship another chapter in Magnus Carlsen's fascinating biography has been completed and we all want to read on. He has said that he will continue to follow his own course, no one has to tell him anything. A first new experiment has been planned for his first tournament as World Champion, in Zurich next February. We will see what it is.

Magnus Carlsen stuns us or puzzles us. And although his behaviour may not always be thought through, we are perhaps secretly envious that he invariably gets away with it. The night after he won the highest title, he played poker till six in the morning with friends and then slept till well in the afternoon while a contingent of Norwegian journalists sat waiting in the lobby hoping to speak to him. In vain. Having woken up he left the hotel to let off steam playing football and basketball. They grumbled, but no one protested openly, knowing that they still need him.

At the prize-giving he appeared in an outfit of his sponsors, without a tie, his hair slightly ruffled, and as he received the trophy, his shirt came untucked. He was happy and smiling and no one seemed to care that he had not dressed more ceremonially. He can bring glamour to chess or take chess to the world of glamour. And hopefully open new markets for chess that have never been tapped by the world chess federation. Perhaps that's why a high-ranking FIDE official told members of the Anand team that 'the wrong guy' had won.

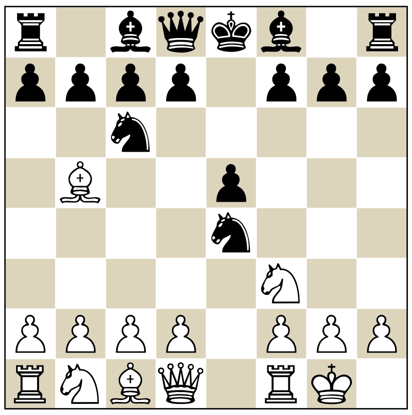
Together with friends, family and sponsors, Carlsen flew back to Norway, where at Oslo airport an enthusiastic crowd awaited him, and his plane was welcomed with a spray-down, a tribute normally reserved for pilots that have flown their final flight. Three days later he celebrated his 23rd birthday in Madrid, where he had been invited to perform the kick-off of the match Real Madrid-Valladolid. And, yes, of course he met Cristiano Ronaldo. At his young age Magnus Carlsen's flights of imagination and creativity are far from over. We can only marvel about what more is yet to come.

NOTES BY
Anish Giri

RL 7.4 – C67
Vishy Anand
Magnus Carlsen
Chennai 2013 (4)

The score was still equal and the players had only warmed up...

1.e4 As in Game 2, where Magnus went for a dubious line in the Caro-Kann. No doubt team Anand had prepared something there, but there was also no doubt that Magnus was not going to repeat it. **1...e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6** The Berlin. Can you play more solid than that? **4.0-0 ♘xe4**



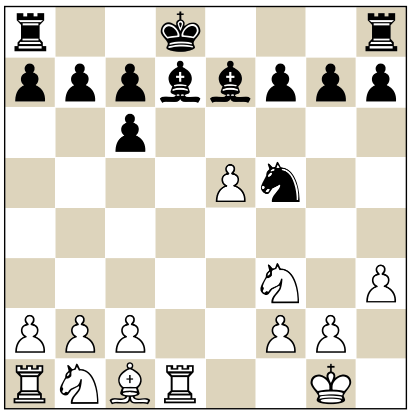
5.d4! Going for the endgame. Later in the match the players would play a few anti-Berlins.

5...♘d6 6.♗xc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 ♘f5 8.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 9.h3

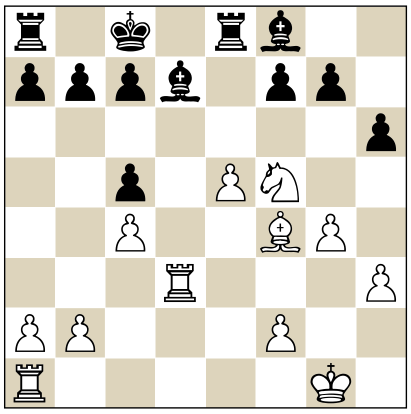
This move order has got very popular lately and has been used by many strong players, including yours truly.

9...♗d7 10.♖d1 ♗e7

The pet line of Jon Ludvig Hammer, the only player in Magnus's team that you could have counted on. Very surprisingly, Anand didn't cause Black any theoretical problems in this game. 10...♔c8 has been more topical lately. A few important games were played by Fabiano Caruana and myself: Caruana-Kramnik 2013, Caruana-Adams 2013, Giri-Nakamura 2013 and Caruana-Nakamura 2013. The score was good for Black, but the positions are quite complicated and Anand no doubt had some ideas there.



11.♘c3 Caruana played 11.g4 against Grischuk at the European Team Championships one day earlier. The game was very instructive: 11...♘h4 12.♘xh4 ♗xh4 13.♘d2!? ♔c8 14.♘f3 ♗e7 15.♖d3!? h6 16.♘d4 ♖e8! 17.♗f4 c5 18.♘f5 ♗f8 (note how nicely Black has managed to regroup) 19.c4



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

19...a6! (preparing ...b5, which Fabiano had underestimated in his preparation) 20.♘e3 b5 21.b3 g5 22.♗g3 ♗e6 23.♖ad1 ♔b7 24.h4 ♔c6 25.h5 ♖eb8!, followed by ...a5-a4, and Black got enough counterplay.

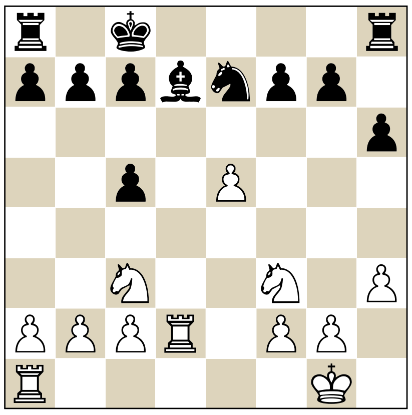
11...♔c8 12.♗g5 12.g4 is possible, too: 12...♘h4 13.♘xh4 ♗xh4 14.♘e4 b6 15.♗g5 ♗xg5 16.♘xg5 h6! 17.♘xf7 ♖e8!, and to rescue the knight White will have to return the pawn. The position was balanced in Dominguez-Navara, 2013, and that game was eventually drawn.

12...h6 13.♗xe7 ♘xe7

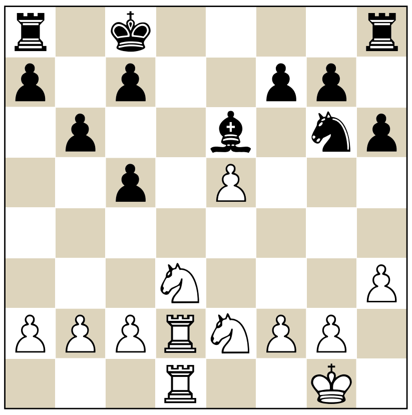
Thus far the game has followed the course of an old game Jakovenko-Almasi (Khanty-Mansiysk 2007), which White managed to win, although it's not clear whether that was the logical outcome after the opening. Another important predecessor is Berg-Hammer, Greece 2012.

14.♖d2 In the next five moves White gets himself outplayed, so his play in this phase should be improved upon.

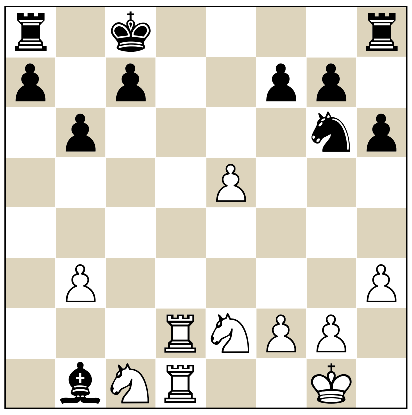
14...c5



15.♖ad1 ♗e6 16.♘e1 ♘g6 17.♘d3 b6 18.♘e2 Giving a pawn, but in any case Black's position is very comfortable already, as the unorthodox knight on d3 is not that great here. After 18.b3!? ♔b7 19.f4 h5 Black manages to block White on the kingside and can create some play on the queenside with an eventual ...c4.



18...♗xa2! A matter of simple calculation. **19.b3 c4 20.♘dc1 cxb3 21.cxb3 ♗b1!**



Here, as Vishy said, he had thought something might turn up, some tactic, but it simply didn't.

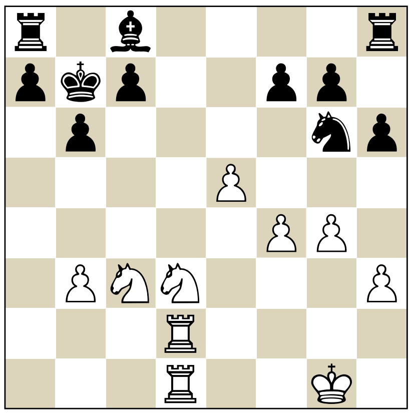
22.f4

The best try. Now White at least gets his majority going.

22.e6 is met by 22...fxe6 (22...♗f5!?) 23.♘c3 ♗f5 24.g4 ♘h4!.

And 22.♖d7 by 22...♖g8! (22...♘xe5 23.♖e7).

22...♔b7 23.♘c3 ♗f5 24.g4 ♗c8 25.♘d3

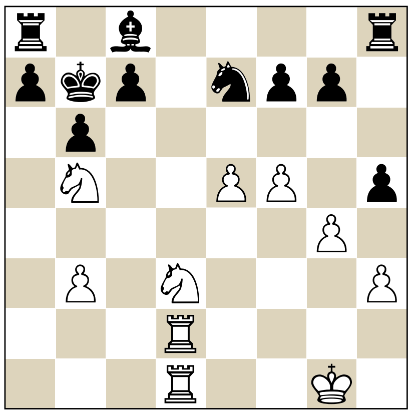


25...h5

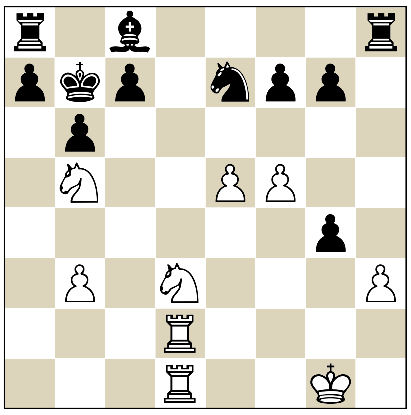
Anand mildly criticized this move, but in fact he underestimated his position (as he continuously did throughout the match). White is of course worse, but not lost, and even after his suggestion, White still keeps defensive resources.

25...♘e7!? was suggested by Anand. Clever now is 26.♖c1!?, with the idea of meeting 26...♘c6 with 27.♘d5, and it's not so easy for Black to activate his pieces.

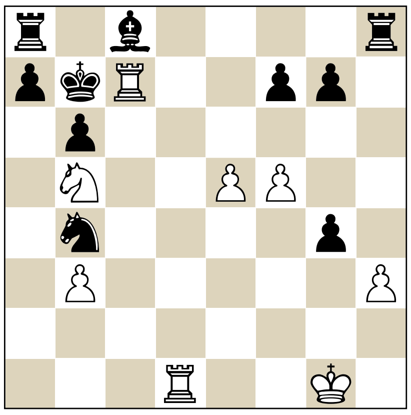
26.f5 ♘e7 27.♘b5



27...hxg4? Many people asked the same question: why didn't Magnus kick the knight away from b5 with 27...a6!: 28.♘d4 hxg4 29.hxg4 a5, and here White has far fewer tricks than in the game. The position may comfortably be assessed as ∓.

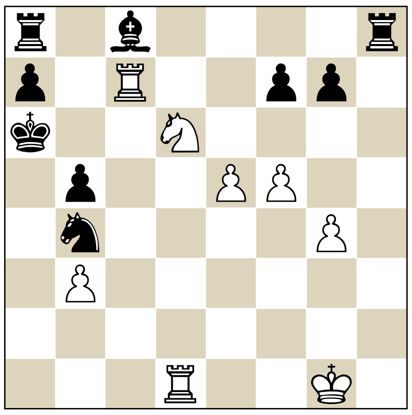


28.hxg4?
This reminds me of the famous story how Kasparov lost a bishop vs. knight endgame because during the adjournment analysis with his team they automatically went for gxh4 gxh4. Anand, however, unlike Karpov, failed to exploit his opponent's inaccuracy.
He could have done so with 28.♖c2! ♘d5 29.♘b4! ♘xb4 30.♖xc7+



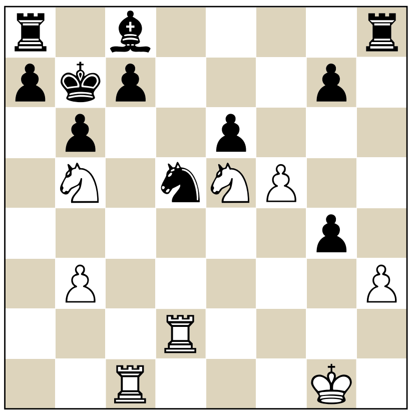
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

30...♔a6 (30...♔b8 – with the black rook in the corner, White has enough compensation for the piece here, too: 31.♖xf7 ♘c6 32.e6 a6 33.♘d6 ♖a7 34.♖xa7 ♔xa7 35.♘xc8+ ♖xc8 36.♖d7+ ♔b8 37.♖xg7 gxh3 38.f6, and the connected pawns are worth more than a piece here. The position is equal: 38...♖f8 39.♖f7 ♖e8 40.♖g7 ♖xe6 41.f7) 31.♘d6. Now the threat is ♖a1 mate, so the reply is forced: 31...b5 32.hxg4, and White has full compensation for the piece. The following line illustrates the possibilities:



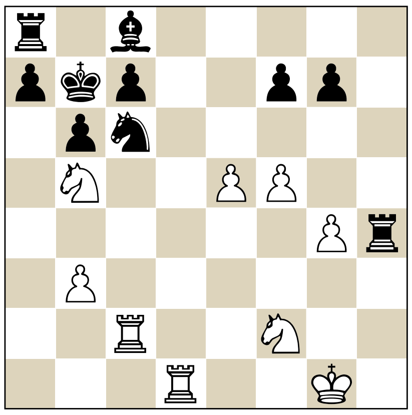
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

32...♔b6 33.♖xf7 ♖g8 34.e6 a5 35.g5 a4 36.bxa4 bxa4 37.e7 ♗d7 38.e8♕ ♗xe8 39.♖b7+ ♔c5 40.♘e4+ ♔c4 41.♘d6+ ♔c3 42.♘e4+, with a draw.
28.♖c1 ♘d5 29.e6 fxe6 30.♘e5 was the mating idea I proposed during the game, but it's a bluff, of course:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

30...a5! (but 30...gxh3 31.♖xc7+ ♘xc7 32.♘d6+ ♔b8 – 32...♔a6 33.♖a2 mate – 33.♘c6 mate is damn pretty though).
28...♖h4?! As on the previous move, 28...a6! was too good not to be played.
29.♘f2 Now it's no longer so easy, as 29...a6 allows 30.♘d6+, so Black has to bear with the knight on b5.
29...♘c6 30.♖c2



30...a5
30...g6 right away was very challenging as well: 31.♔f1! (31.e6 fxe6 32.fxg6 ♖h6! 33.g7 ♖g6). This deep king move turns out to be essential: 31...gxf5 32.♖dc1 ♗d7 33.♘d4!.
After 31.♖dc1 (instead of 31.♔f1!) 31...♗d7 32.♘d4 ♘xd4 33.♖xc7+ ♔b8! it becomes evident why the king had to be placed on f1: there is a fork on e2!.
31.♖c4!
Preventing ...a4.
31...g6

LENNART OOTES

Like everywhere else in India, cricket remains the most popular sport in Chennai. Here it is played outside the Don Bosco school that young Vishy Anand attended.

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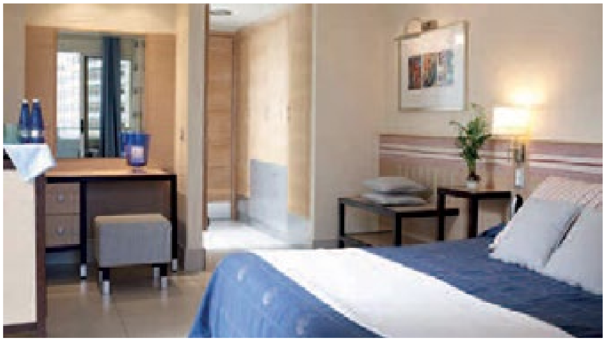

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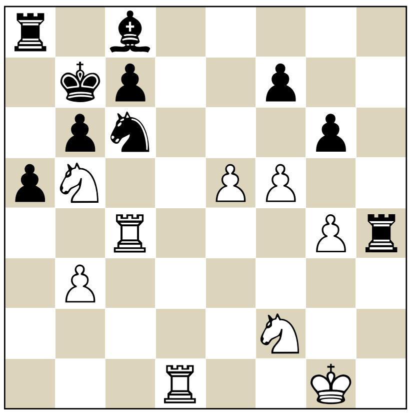
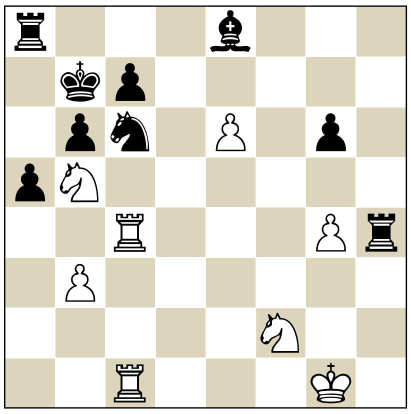


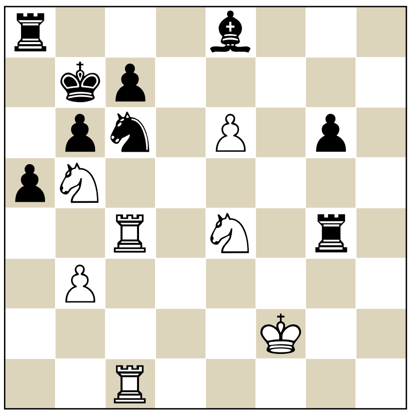
Breaking the kingside pawn structure. Here everyone thought Vishy was doomed, but the Champion probably remembered his good days and managed to regain absolute harmony in his position by sacrificing one more pawn.

31...♗xf5 is also slightly better for Black, although White should be able to hold: 32.♖xc6! ♔xc6 33.♘d4+ ♔b7 34.♘xf5.

32.♖dc1 ♗d7 33.e6 fxe6 34.fxe6 ♗e8



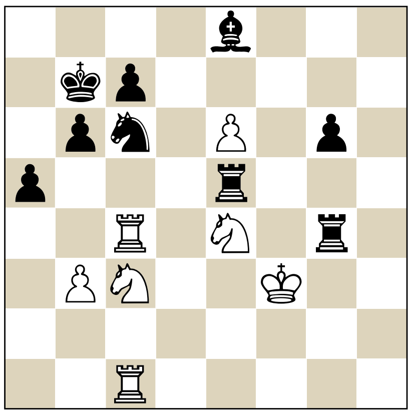
35.♘e4! A brilliant resource by Vishy. **35...♖xg4+ 36.♔f2**



36...♖f4+?

In mutual time-trouble Magnus lets Vishy off the hook.

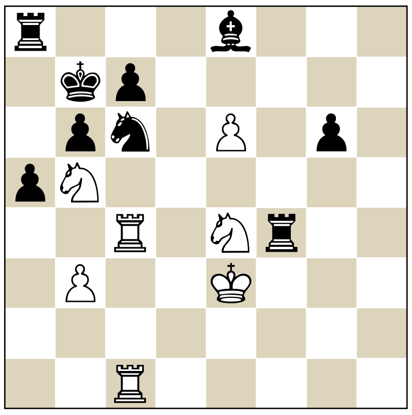
36...♖d8! was much subtler. Now Anand would have had to find 37.♔e3!! (renewing the threat of ♘c5+. 37.♘ed6+? cxd6 38.♖xg4 ♘e5 39.e7 ♘xg4+, and Black wins; 37.♘c5+? bxc5 38.♖xg4 ♘e5, and wins) 37...♖d5! 38.♘bc3 ♖e5 39.♔f3, and Black loses an exchange, but he does pick up a third pawn:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

39...♖gxe4!? (39...♖eg5!? is pure computer equilibristics: 40.♘xg5 ♘e5+ 41.♔e2! ♘xc4 42.♘ce4! ♘e5 43.♔e3!!, and White holds) 40.♖xe4 ♖xe6!. Now Black can be content; the position has been clarified and he has decent chances: 41.♖xe6 ♘d4+ 42.♔e3 ♘xe6, and I am not as good at estimating chances as the famous poker player Alexander Grischuk, but I can tell you that Black's winning chances are definitely pretty good here.

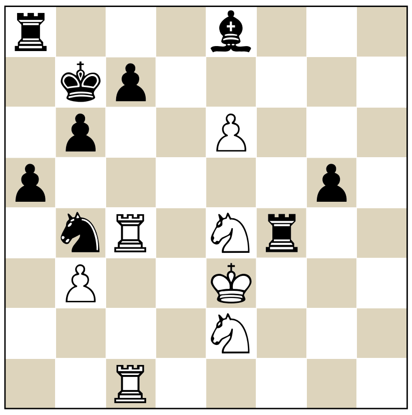
37.♔e3



37...♖f8?!

This allows Vishy to steer the game towards a draw.

37...g5! would have kept some winning chances. The position is very complicated and the line goes 38.♘d4 (38.♖g1!? is less forcing, but possibly better: 38...♖h4 39.♖xg5 ♖h7, with a black edge) 38...♘b4! 39.♘e2



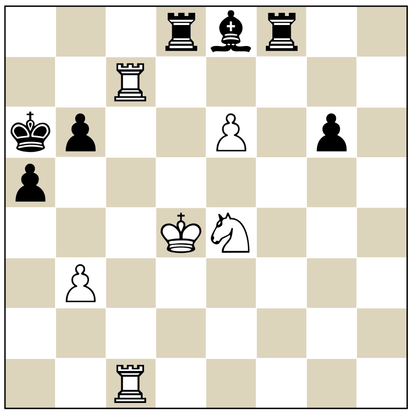
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

39...♗c6!? (a tough move to see in advance) 40.♘xf4 gxf4+ 41.♔xf4 ♘d3+ (winning back the exchange) 42.♔f5 ♘xc1 43.♖xc1 a4 44.b4, and Black has various ways to try, for example: 44...a3!? 45.♘c3 a2 46.♖a1 ♖a3 47.♘xa2 ♗a4, and White still has to solve some problems as his knight is pinned. We are quite deep here, but you would be surprised to know how forcing it is.

37...♖f5 also allows White to equalize: 38.♘bd6+ cxd6 39.♘xd6+ ♔a6 40.♘xf5 gxf5 41.♖xc6 ♗xc6 42.♖xc6 ♔b5 43.♖c7.

38.♘d4! ♘xd4 39.♖xc7+ ♔a6 40.♔xd4 ♖d8+

Now the position is equal. The key is just not to blunder into 41.♔e5 ♖f5 mate.

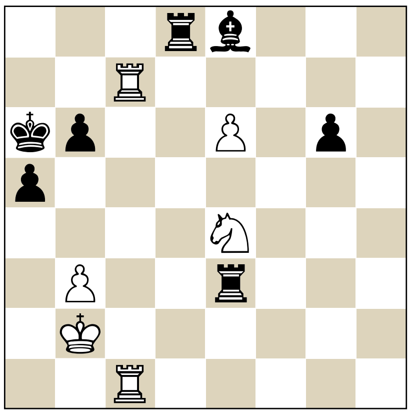


41.♔c3

Vishy plays it safe. In fact, his king could safely have gone to the other side. But he had reasons to be content with a draw, even from a position of weakness. A 2 vs. 1 rook endgame is inevitable.

After 41.♔e3! ♗b5 42.♖f7! the e6-pawn shouldn't be underestimated. White will also quickly activate all his pieces and the game will become very double-edged, with a draw still remaining the objective evaluation.

41...♖f3+ 42.♔b2 ♖e3



43.♖c8!

The point. Now the minor pieces get traded off and it's a draw. Magnus manages to keep the game going for a while, though.

43...♖dd3 44.♖a8+

The easiest.

44.♖1c4!? would force a draw, but it's too complicated and unnecessary.

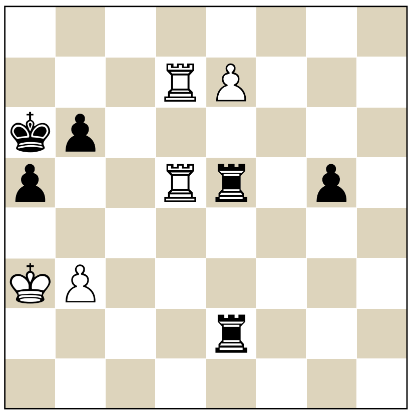
44...♔b7 45.♖xe8 ♖xe4 46.e7 ♖g3

Magnus tries his best from here on in, but the draw is inevitable. Eventually White will be able to trade his e7-pawn for the g-pawn.

47.♖c3 ♖e2+ 48.♖c2 ♖ee3 49.♔a2 g5 50.♖d2 ♖e5 51.♖d7+ ♔c6 52.♖ed8

52.♖a7 also forces a draw: 52...♖ge3 53.♖g8.

52...♖ge3 53.♖d6+ ♔b7 54.♖8d7+ ♔a6 55.♖d5 ♖e2+ 56.♔a3



56...♖e6! The last trick.

57.♖d8

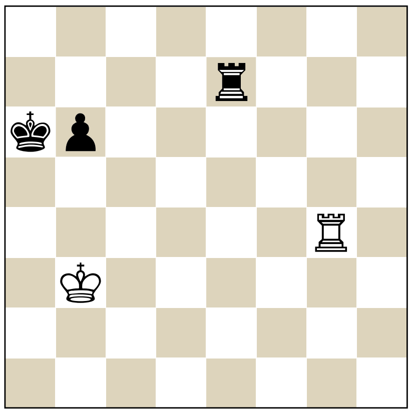
With only one minute left, Vishy got visibly nervous, but it was more than enough time for him to figure out the way to draw the game.

57.e8♕ would have led to the same result: 57...♖xe8 58.♖xg5 ♖f2 59.♖gg7 ♖ee2 60.♖a7+ ♔b5 61.♖g5+ ♔c6 62.♖g6+ ♔c5 63.♖g5+ ♔d6 64.♖g6+ ♔d5 65.♔a4.

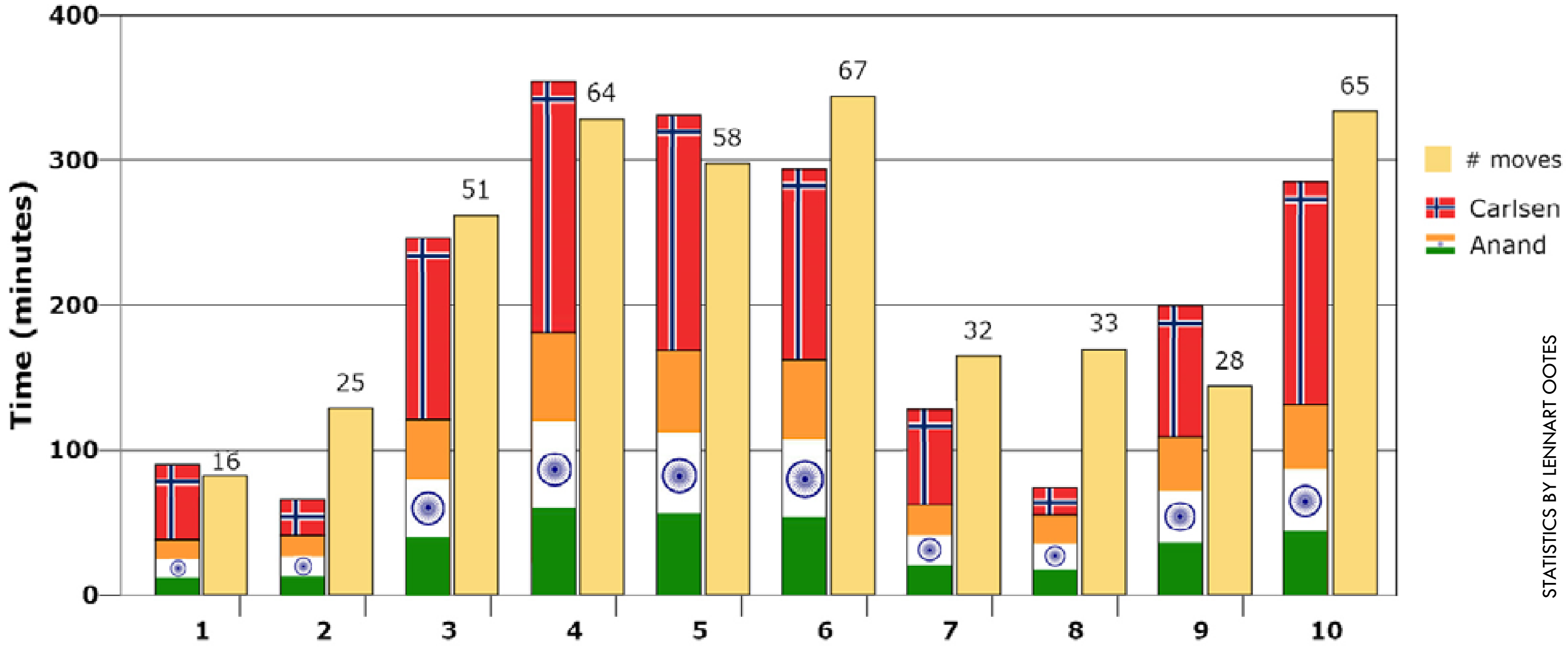
57...g4 58.♖g5 ♖xe7 59.♖a8+! ♔b7 60.♖ag8

And White not only wins the g-pawn, but also trades off one pair of rooks. The game is drawn after all.

60...a4 61.♖xg4 axb3 62.♖8g7 ♔a6 63.♖xe7 ♖xe7 64.♔xb3

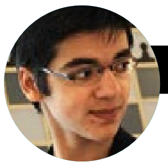


Draw. What a fight!



STATISTICS BY LENNART OOTES

Long games were expected, drawn out attempts by the challenger to wear out the champion. Essentially prolonged fights indeed proved to be the decisive battleground, but there were short games, too, as this graph, giving the number of moves and the time spent by the players shows.



NOTES BY
Anish Giri

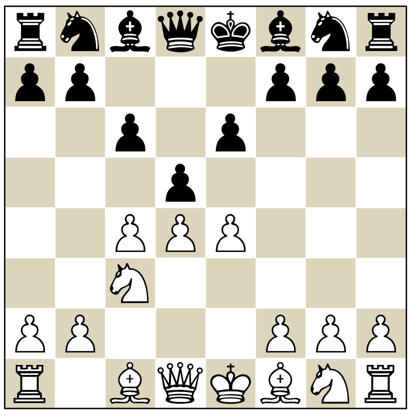
SL 6.1 – D31
Magnus Carlsen
Vishy Anand
Chennai 2013 (5)

1.c4 In his first two White games, Magnus tried 1.♘f3, and it seems that Vishy was convincing enough with his Grünfeld set-up. Indeed, Magnus can consider himself lucky to have scored two draws there, judging by the positions that he got. Now I assume he tried to get a slow anti-Slav set-up, this time with another move order.

1...e6!

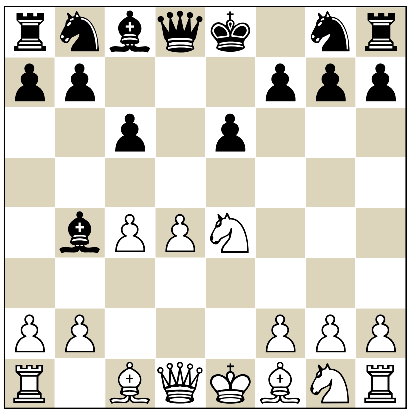
If there is something that Vishy has done very well in this match, it's his choice of openings. Here he is aiming for his pet semi-Slav, while avoiding Magnus' favourite Slow Slav with ♘f3 and e3.

2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 c6 4.e4



After two slow White openings from Magnus this came as a shocker. A theoretical discussion in one of the sharpest lines in chess theory? Really?

4...dxe4 5.♘xe4 ♗b4+

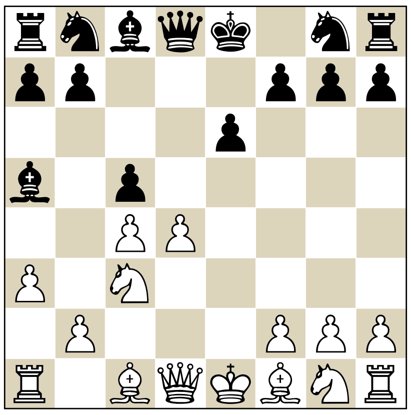


6.♘c3! NOT really! Magnus stays true to himself, gets his favourite pawn structure with a potential queenside majority (after an eventual ...c5 break) and avoids any direct crisis in the opening.

6...c5 Another break is 6...e5, which also deserves some attention. Generally, if we consider that White has wasted some moves with his knight (♘c3-e4-c3), it should be logical that Black has comfortable equality in this line, which indeed he has.

7.a3 ♗a5

A nice manoeuvre. Black doesn't want to strengthen White's d4-pawn by taking on c3 too early.



8.♘f3

After 8.dxc5 ♗xc3+! the c3-pawn loses its function as supporter of d4!: 9.bxc3 ♕xd1+ 10.♔xd1, and White's tripled pawns are too miserable to give him any advantage. Soon the c5-pawn will be captured by the knight and Black will have a nice blockade on the c5-square. Similarly, White's king is misplaced on d1. All of this defines Black's fine perspectives.

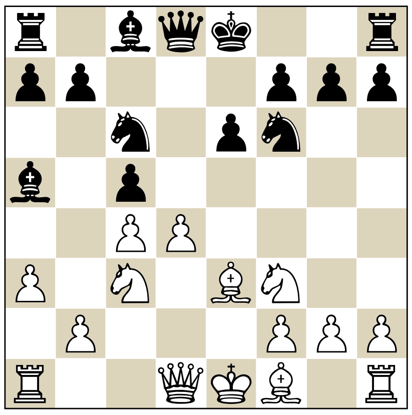
8...♘f6 9.♗e3

Providing some extra protection for the d-pawn and (apparently) slowly but surely preparing to castle queenside!

9.♗e2, followed by 0-0, looks simpler at first sight, but White will not have time to finish his development comfortably. For example, after 9...♘e4 White is forced to give up his dark-squared bishop with 10.♗d2, and then I don't think that Black should be having any problems.

9...♘c6

Putting some extra pressure on the d4-pawn.



10.♕d3!?

This move is not exactly the type of move one loves to make, but White has to do something extraordinary if he wants to create a fight.

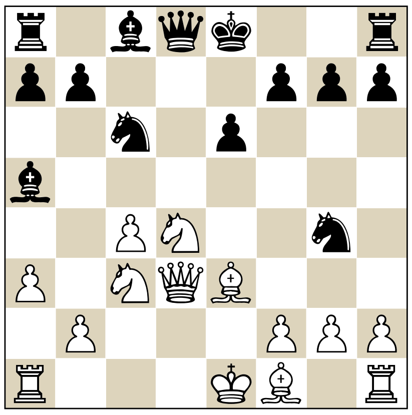
10.♗e2 is again met by 10...♘e4, and now, after 11.♖c1 ♘xc3 12.bxc3 cxd4 13.♘xd4 ♘xd4 14.♗xd4, White's structure is completely ruined and Black is comfortable.

10.♖c1 is another clever move, but Black can try to use his lead in development with either the capture on c3, followed by ...♘e4, or with ...♕b6, putting some pressure on the b2-pawn.

10...cxd4 11.♘xd4

Anyone who has studied Magnus' games can see some similarities between this position and Carlsen-Gelfand from the Candidates' tournament in London. Here, though, Black seems to be way ahead.

11...♘g4 The critical continuation. In an amateur game earlier this year, Black played 11...♘e5 first, which is perfectly fine, too.



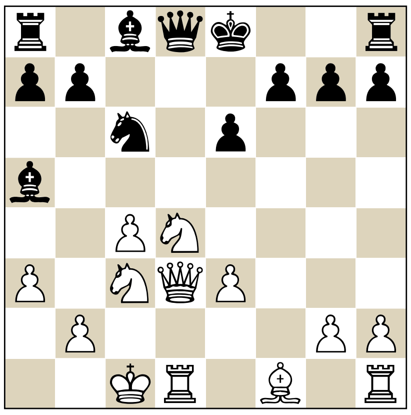
12.0-0-0!?

Again, the only way to keep some life in the game, but objectively White is nowhere close to being any better. In fact, here I got very optimistic for Anand, only to see him ending up in a passive position 10 moves later...

12...♘xe3 13.fxe3

I was very surprised to see (at the press conference and in the media) that everyone claimed that White got an advantage in the opening. I am sorry, what? White has just lost his dark-squared bishop, his pawn-structure is messed up and White is not going to enjoy either the middlegame or the endgame.

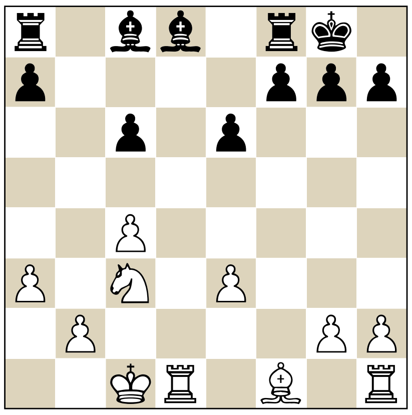
The problem for Anand was not his position, but the fact that for some reason he tried to suffer his way towards a draw when the position didn't require it.



13...♗c7?

Why so passive? OK, I understand the logic behind this move: Carlsen wants to trade queens on d8, which he probably wants to do in most positions, knowing his passion for queenless middlegames. Now, if this happened, Anand would prefer to keep his king in the centre, rather than hidden on g8. In fact, Black can probably afford any move and still have a solid position, but objectively Black had a few other ways to handle this position, which were also much more fun.

First, let's pretend we are crude laymen: 13...0-0. Here I assume White would have to do the same thing: 14.♘xc6 bxc6 15.♕xd8 (15.b4 wins a tempo in a way, but creates a potential target after Black goes ...a7-a5: 15...♗c7 16.♕xd8 ♗xd8 17.♗e2 ♖b8 18.♗f3 a5!) 15...♗xd8. Now Black has the idea of attacking the e3-pawn and eventually developing his pieces. It would take the great endgame skills of Magnus to show how exactly he would equalize the game.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

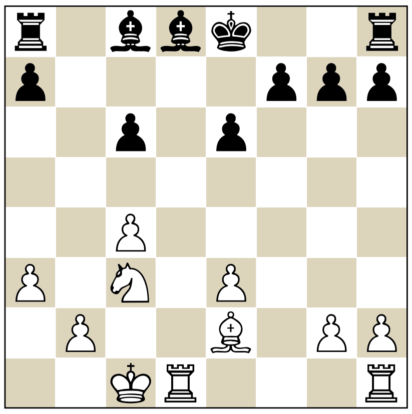
For example, 16.♗e2 ♗b6 17.♖d3 e5! 18.♗f3 ♗f5 19.♗e4 ♗e6 20.♘a4 ♗xc4 21.♖c3, and White gets enough play for the pawn to claim equality.

13...♘xd4 is the move if you want to avoid the queen swap: after 14.exd4 0-0 15.♔b1 White has improved his pawn structure, but Black still has two bishops and a safe king, so there is not much to worry about and he might play 15...e5!?.

> 'The problem for Anand was not his position, but the fact that for some reason he tried to suffer his way towards a draw when the position didn't require it.'

13...♕e7!? is even cleverer than the move in the game and has a right to exist. Black wants to castle kingside, not exchange the queens and not change the pawn structure. White, though, would continue with 14.♘xc6 bxc6 15.♘e4 0-0 16.♕d6!, and most likely Black should exchange the queens after all, but of course he is still nowhere near being worse here.

14.♘xc6 bxc6 15.♕xd8+ ♗xd8 16.♗e2



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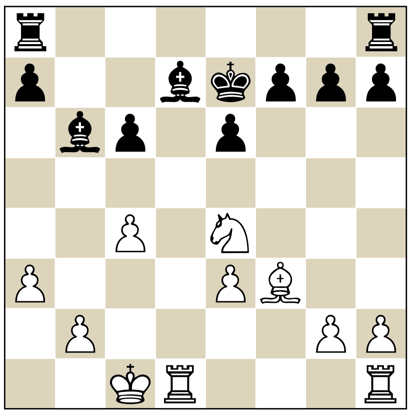
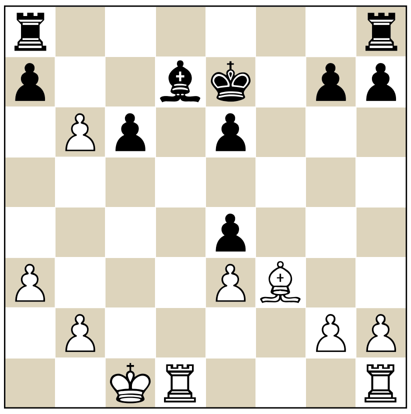
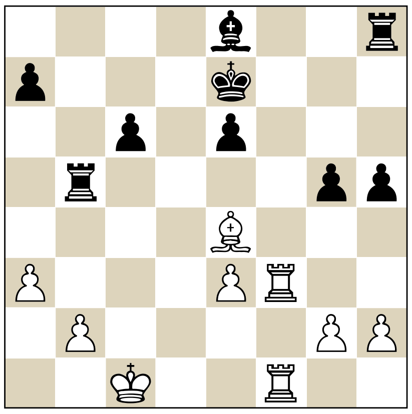
16...♔e7
Another solid move, but in retrospect (not judging by the position that Anand got, but by the way the match went) Anand might have gone for the more complicated option here: 16...♗b6!? 17.♖d3 ♗a6 18.b3 ♖d8 (or 18...♔e7!?).
17.♗f3 ♗d7 18.♘e4 ♗b6



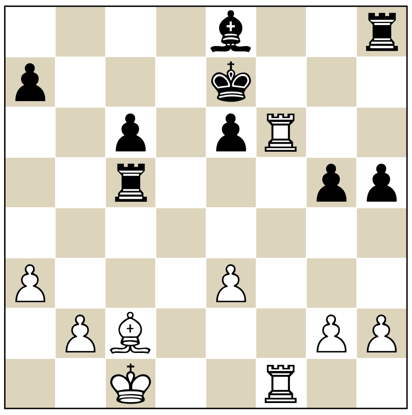
After this move the roles have finally been established. Magnus is pressing, Anand is defending.
19.c5 f5 20.cxb6 fxe4



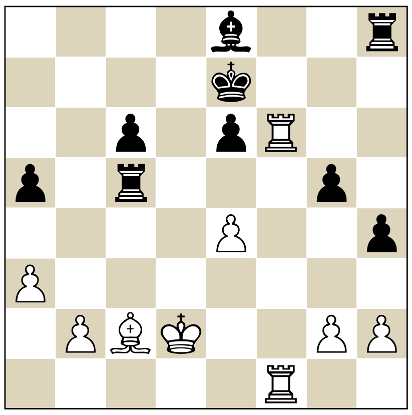
21.b7!
A nice move to enter into the endgame books under the topic of pawn islands.
21...♖ab8 22.♗xe4 ♖xb7 23.♖hf1
White is slightly better, but Black has very good chances to equalize completely. His pieces are easy to activate and the slightly weakened queenside is not really making itself felt yet.
23...♖b5!
Transferring the rook to e5.
24.♖f4 g5
Anand hits White's f4-rook, while keeping the e5-square for his.
24...e5! is another possible set-up, activating the bishop: 25.♖f2 ♗e6, and Black should be holding this position quite comfortably with his king so well placed in the centre.
25.♖f3 h5 26.♖df1 ♗e8



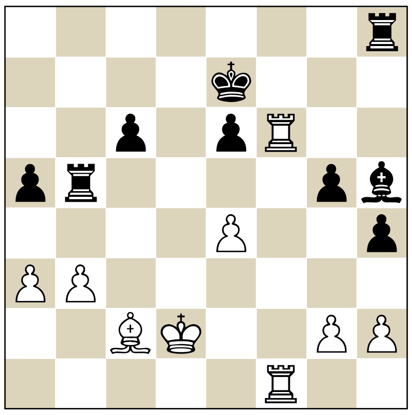
The bishop is defending the f7-square and White has to show an idea here, as it is not so clear how to proceed.
27.♗c2 ♖c5 28.♖f6



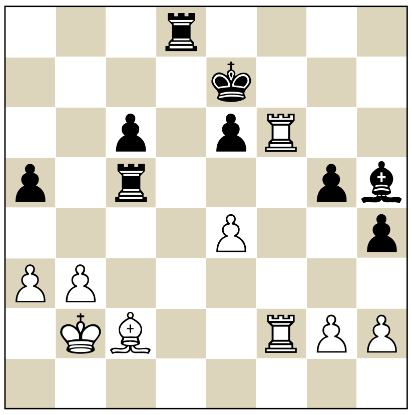
28...h4!
At some stage the bishop may get to h5.
29.e4!
While the pawn is placed on the colour of the bishop, White now has other ideas in mind. First of all he restricts the c5-rook; and the e3-square may at some point come in handy for White's king after the regrouping by ♔d2, ♗d3 and ♔e3.
29...a5 30.♔d2
Quite creative would have been the continuation of the 'anti-positional' pawn moves: 30.a4 ♗h5 31.b3, but it would not worry Anand too much, as first of all the king is far from trapping the rook, and secondly the rook can always escape to g5 after Black pushes the g-pawn one step further.



30...♖b5 As ♗d3 was already a threat. **31.b3 ♗h5!**



Not only the bishop comes to life, but the h8-rook is now also free to enter the game via d8. Structurally, Black is still worse, but with his pieces getting more and more active, he seems to be doing alright here. **32.♔c3 ♖c5+ 33.♔b2 ♖d8 34.♖1f2**



34...♖d4!? An excellent move, which Anand was too critical of, calling it the decisive mistake. Generally speaking, when one manages to lose a fine position, it is often hard to notice when things started to go wrong.
35.♖h6
35.♗b1 is terribly clever, but fortunately (in the humans vs. computers clash) it doesn't change the assessment

(Continued on page 34)

What frustrates him most is that he didn't manage to bring anything. That he failed to eliminate the mistakes and oversights that had plagued his play in the past year. Close to his home in Chennai, Vishy Anand had to give up the world title in a one-sided match that ended prematurely. All he wants to do now is to come to terms with the new reality and get ready for the tournaments ahead. London, Zurich and the Candidates' tournament in Khanty-Mansiysk in March, where Carlsen's first challenger will be determined. The Candidates' too? 'That's what I am thinking.'

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

Anand has sent his driver to pick me up. Originally the plan was to meet at his house, but his two-year-old son Akhil is having his afternoon nap and he prefers to go to a place where we don't have to whisper. His driver picks me up at the Hyatt Regency, the venue of the match, and after a short ride we arrive at the Sheraton. As the bottom of the car and the boot are checked for explosives by ornately uniformed security guards, another car pulls up behind us with Anand in the back seat speaking on the phone. He has been coming to the Sheraton for many years, using the outdoor pool as a member of their sports club before he changed to a fitness centre a bit further down the road. His house is at walking distance from the stately hotel, although it's unimaginable he ever walked over in the permanent chaos of cars, buses, mopeds, tuk-tuks, bicycles and pedestrians that is called traffic here. This is the part of Chennai where he grew up and where he has returned to live. On the façade of his house it says in large letters 'Varuna', the 'V' standing for Vishy or Viswanathan, the rest for his wife Aruna.

Last night Arvind Aaron, the head of the press centre of the match and a childhood friend of Anand's, gave me a tour of the neighbourhood. Within minutes we not only passed Anand's house, but also the house of his parents, where he grew up. Equally close was the house of Arvind's younger years, where we went to meet his father Manuel Aaron, India's first International Chess Master, who in 1961 won the prestigious Arjuna Award, a national honour that would be bestowed on Anand in 1985. All of them live close to the beach of the Indian Ocean, which is a popular destination for relaxing at the end of the day.

Anand arrives in a colourful T-shirt with 'Chennai' on it and underneath it the area code of this part of town. He heads straight for the coffee bar, where we sit down. He looks fit and relaxed, but barely beneath the surface signs of sadness are visible that betray that he has been wounded.

‘My problem was that I never really found him. I never managed to get a grip on his style.’

Vishy Anand, lost in thought after his loss in Game 9. ‘In all my games, there were mistakes, slipups, just way too often. At some point this becomes the elephant in the room, you can’t ignore it.’

NEW IN CHESS

Although it's only a small distance, I take it that it was a conscious decision to stay at the hotel and not come to the games from your house.
'Staying at home is just a bad idea. Getting to the hotel gives you the feeling that it's serious and that it is really starting now. All my life the moment you check into a hotel has been the moment that something clicks in your head and you know it's really going to start. I didn't see why we should deviate from that. At home there will always be distractions. I trained in Germany, as always, and then we all got there a bit before the start of the match.'

You had to find replacements when Peter Heine Nielsen and Rustam Kasimdzhanov were no longer available. How did you compose your team?
'In fact, they were all guys I'd worked with before. I didn't work with anyone new. Sasi (Krishnan Sasikiran) I had worked with on several occasions in the past, Sandipan (Chanda) you already saw in Norway. The team came together very fast. I have known these guys for quite a long time, we are talking 10 years minimum. And Peter (Leko) and me also go back a long way. It was always clear that there were going to be a lot of changes in the team. For me it was nice that Radek (Wojtaszek) was here. I mean, it was a sacrifice for him to give up the European Teams in Warsaw. He took on the part of explaining to the others, you know, what kind of a guy we are dealing with. This is what he likes and this is what he doesn't like. Essentially since we trained for a couple of months anyway, I think it wasn't such a big factor. That's also the point of training, you all get to know each other.'

How do you look back on the training and the approach you chose, now that you found that in fact there was pretty little to prepare for?
'I don't think it's a question of what to prepare for, because it was always clear to us that you're not trying to get in an opening novelty. That hasn't been the case much recently. It was clear his approach was going to be different, but I still think that my strategy, if you like, was plausible. If you're playing someone like Magnus, I mean if you're playing anyone in general, you still have to address this problem that I ran into, that in all my games, there were mistakes, slipups, just way too often. At some point this becomes the elephant in the room, you can't ignore it. And especially with Magnus, because he's someone who likes to play long games, he even multiplies the problem. So it was always clear that I'd have to focus on that, and so some of the opening work focused on me being familiar with the positions that were going to arise. Obviously we are not trying to get into this specific position, we are just trying to make sure that I am familiar with everything, so that the chances of mistakes are lower. That's all you can really do. And I made the decision not to avoid long games. Well, not to be scared of them. If a long game happens I should be ready to face a long battle and if I make my point and confront him there, in his strongest point admittedly, if I can play a good long game and defend well, then it takes the pressure off me for everything else. So again, the problem was that it was a plausible strategy, but I simply couldn't see it through. In the fifth game I had the feeling that I lost something five times. I lost it once in the early opening, then in a slightly later part, then at the end of the middle game. Bit by bit I lost that game. This was a literally traumatic experience. This is the problem also, the reason why I didn't want to concede this area. Because of my previous failure in this area, that's the part people are going to aim for and rightly so. If you don't take the easy draws when they come, then people are going to try you again and again till they understand the problem is fixed. Because if you fix the problem they are forced to move away.'

> 'I always left for the airport frustrated. It's just been a frustrating year, and now the end as well.'

Did you think that if you'd stand the stress and the pressure in those long games, that at a certain point he would deviate from his strategy?
'Well, he would have to. I mean, if you block that area well and you simply play on equal terms, then he has to do something. I don't say he'd have to go for the openings, but certainly the game opens up. At least that's what I thought.'

The moment you realize you fail to do what you intended to do, is there anything your team can do for you? They kept on working hard. What were they working on then?
'They were trying to find more suitable positions, trying to give you more and more little details here and there. Because they understood what ideas I found difficult and were trying to guide me a bit more. (Sighs) Yeah, it didn't really work.'

Were you shocked to hear when he revealed that apart from Jon Ludvig Hammer he didn't have anyone? (This was my information at this point – DJtG)
'(He briefly flinches, then replies curtly) Whatever works for him.'

Does it show a new direction? In a way it looks as if he's ridiculing the old Soviet approach. Twenty seconds, everyone is working for you, and then someone comes and says, we are not going to play

openings and in fact I only had one second. How should we look at this?
'I don't know. I hadn't heard about it, basically. This is the first time I found out. Again, if it works for you, it works for you. The point of having training is that you feel comfortable at the board. Since he feels comfortable doing without it, what does he need a team for? I mean, it's up to me to prove that my way of training was useful. I didn't.'

In the past you often said that the notion of World Champion or the world championship, is a bit overrated, that there is too much focus on it. Has that view changed in the time that you reigned as World Champion in the various formats? That you came to appreciate it more? Because you understood what work you had done for it and what it really meant?
'Yes. I understand that it's simply an event that captures people's attention in a way that no other chess event does. And I came to respect that. But to be honest, I haven't given it a lot of thought.'

Two people were playing this match who both had said on earlier occasions that you shouldn't attach too much weight to the title. At the same time it's one of the biggest events we've seen in years.
'Yes. I mean, not to belittle other events, but this one seems to capture the public imagination much better, so why waste that?'

Apart from the chess on the board, were you happy with the match, the way it was staged?
'Yes, I mean, at the moment it's impossible for me not to think of the result, but I am sure that in a couple of years I will look back and feel very happy that it happened here in Chennai. I was very proud of the event. There was something special. Occasionally I'd look out into the audience and see my old school mates there (hesitates, as if moved), it was special. But right now it's hard not to think about the result.'

NEW IN CHESS

'At the moment it's impossible for me not to think of the result, but I am sure that in a couple of years I will look back and feel very happy that it happened here in Chennai.'

Last time, after the match in Moscow, you said that you had asked Aruna during the match, was it really that bad last time? And she'd say, yes it was as bad then, too. Is it very different when things are not going your way or are you in the middle of the storm so much that this is just one of the factors?
'No, this is very painful obviously. It's mainly the frustration of not being able to see something through, but that's how the whole year has been. It's kind of hating that.'

You know that it's still there, sometimes there have been flashes in the past year...
'Yeah, but I never saw something through. Baden of course. And Baden would have been a good result by any stretch of the imagination. Even if I had not won. But just Wijk aan Zee, Norway, Tal, just everywhere... It would have been nice to have completed one good tournament and come over here with the feeling, ah, that was well done. I always left for the airport frustrated. It's just been a frustrating year, and now the end as well.'

How did you protect yourself the past year? Did you stop reading things, trying to find your own solution independent of what other people were saying?
'I thought the main way to get my confidence back would be simply to... instead of tricking yourself in some way, to actually play a good match. I was quite determined to play a good match, but it simply wasn't happening.'

And now everyone wants to know what's next? Did you ever have plans of how you would round off your career?
'Well, I will play London, which is two weeks from now. Then I will play in Zurich and then the Candidates'. At the moment it's hard for my thoughts to move beyond this. I'd rather come to terms with this first and take some rest and stop thinking about chess. There's still time to get ready for the events. We'll see.'

You include the Candidates'?
'Sure.'

You're determined to go there.
'That's what I am thinking.'

As you say, seeing your school friends in the audience must have been wonderful. It must also have been confusing when you're playing a difficult match...
'Yeah, my problem in the match was that I never really found him. I never managed to get a grip on his style. That was tough, but OK...'

Before the match I was thinking that it would be very easy to come up with rea-

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CHESS ON TOUR

AMSTERDAM
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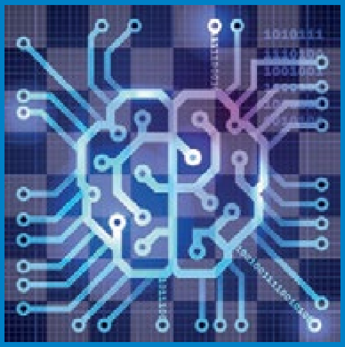


EINDHOVEN
High Tech Campus
23 JANUARY

sons why it is good or bad to play here or to play somewhere else. But you're playing a match where this time you are not the favourite and there is a realistic chance that you will lose it. Is it then a burden to play at home, knowing that people may believe that at the back of your mind you may consider leaving the game?
'Well, the thing is, somebody else also retired. Tendulkar (Sachin Tendulkar, the immensely popular Indian cricket star – DJtG) retired, and people's heads are filled with retirement right now. That's the only thing the media can think of. This is how it works. In general this question has been floating around for a while now... Let me put it this way, it's hard for me to look for explanations beyond my own play. It's clear that my chess has been struggling for a while. I was hoping that I'd rise to the occasion here, but it didn't happen. But it's been going on for a while. Now to say that playing here was an extra burden, then how do I explain the other times?'

Did it influence you in any way? You are having this difficult weekend and then Tendulkar is having his farewell...
'No, there was no connection at all. I mean, he takes a decision that is right for him. (Laughs) You can get into a sport because someone else gets into a sport, but you don't have to retire when he retires!'

And right now you just want to take a break and think about something entirely different.
'Yes. I don't have the energy to sit and think issues through now. At home it is very nice now. Akhil has no clue what has happened. He still wants his book read to him, still wants you to play with him. It's like suddenly you are dealing with something else, completely different from all the other interactions you have. It's nice and very healing.'

Someone suggested that it had become more difficult for you to find motivation since you became a father. To me that sounded as fairly nonsensical for a sportsman.
'It's very joyous, so it's hard to tell. They are two different things. But it's true that the last couple of years have been very, very happy (briefly stares into thin air)... Outside the chessboard. Not that much fun on the chessboard.'

> 'You can get into a sport because someone else gets into a sport, but you don't have to retire when he retires!'

You mean, then you inevitably start comparing things?
'No, I've almost separated the two. But you understand that having a child is the sort of thing that you don't compare to a tournament. It's a completely different level.'

You've returned to live in India. Is that directly connected to your son?
'It predated it. We moved back right after the match with Topalov, so it was actually completely unconnected and then he happened.'

This is what I realized last night when I was driven around here, that this is your place. Everything is familiar for you and everything is yours.
'Yeah, I mean, a lot of the decisions we took I am extremely happy about. Moving back. We kind of already planned to move back in 2006. That's when we got the idea, shall we gradually start going back, because the longer we are going to stay, the harder it is going to get. So already from 2006 to 2010, we were living in the same house here, but still living more in Spain than here. Then, in 2010, that inverted, that changed. But I am very happy in India, that's for sure. I mean, I still like going to Europe or coming to Collado (the village outside Madrid where he used to live – DJtG), but this feels like home. I really like Europe, and if I didn't go to Holland or Spain or something for two or three years, it would feel strange. Even my thoughts are sometimes in two places. We really lived in Europe for 10 years, so it's hard not to remember something from there as well. The European aversion to air-conditioning, I have a bit of that (with a telling smile, as I had remarked that it was a bit cold in the air-conditioned coffee shop – DJtG).

So having a holiday in January will give you the time to think...
'Well, again you are circling me. When are you going to think about something? And I don't even know that I am going to think about it. I will just see how my feelings evolve. I mean, for me it was extremely frustrating that I was not able to achieve anything in this match.'

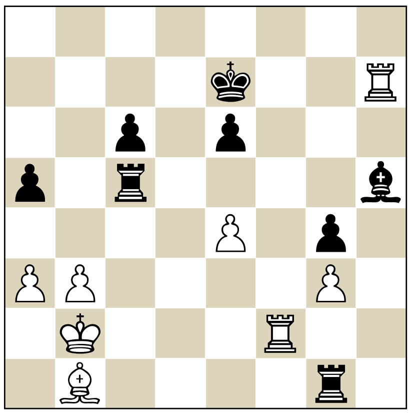
You had your sleepless nights during the match and not necessarily on the day you lost it.
'Well, mainly the day I lost the match. That's when it started big time. But... In general I didn't manage to bring anything and... OK, it's time to move.'

Is that maybe even more frustrating than losing the match?
'(Briefly at a loss) Hard to tell... I mean... (With a faint smile) If I'd won I would not have cared.'

He asks for the bill and gets up. The cars are called. He has an appointment at his fitness club, where he wants to go for a swim. In his training camp in Bad Soden he lost 10 kilos and reached a weight he had not been at for quite some years. It feels better and he would like to keep it that way. It will help him in the new challenges that he may go and think about. Or not. ■

(Continued from page 27)

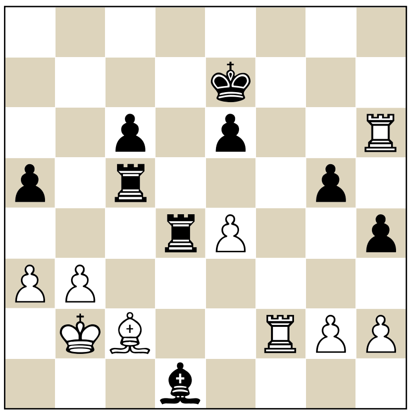
of the position: 35...g4!? 36.g3 hxg3 37.hxg3 ♖d1 38.♖h6 ♖g1 39.♖h7+



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

39...♔e8!, and thanks to his future g4 passer, Black will have enough counterplay to hold the balance.

35...♗d1!

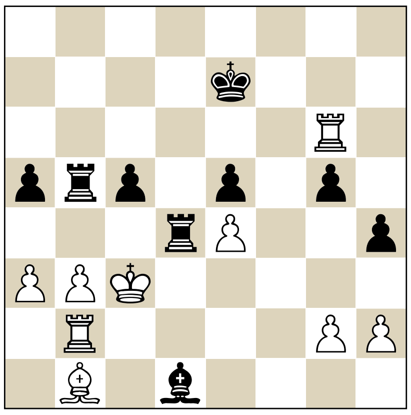


36.♗b1!

Magnus keeps the game going, even though Black is very fine now.

36...♖b5 37.♔c3 c5 37...e5!? severely weakens the sixth rank, but chess is a concrete game and here, too, White has no way to gain anything: 38.♗a2!? ♖xe4 39.b4! axb4+ 40.axb4 ♖f4! 41.♖d2 ♖d4!, and it's a draw, since to mate the black king White needs both his rooks to be active.

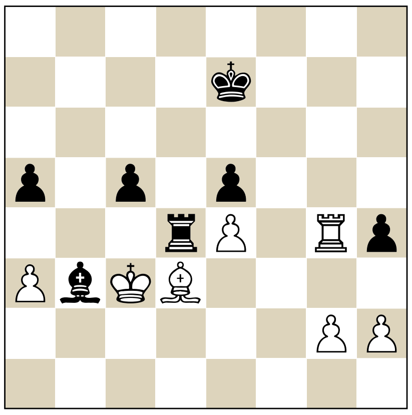
38.♖b2 e5 39.♖g6



COURTESY VG

Magnus Carlsen (with computer *and* chess board) in his room in the Hyatt Regency.

39...a4 An intuitive decision to simplify and clarify the position to the maximum in time-trouble. However, this makes Black's defence somewhat more difficult, as he will lose a pawn. 39...g4 was natural and good. The position is just equal: 40.♗d3 (40.♖h6 a4!) 40...♖xb3+ 41.♖xb3 ♗xb3 42.♖xg4, and now Black has quite a few ways to create counterplay, the most aesthetic being

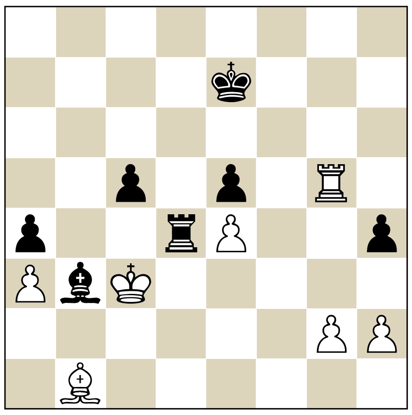


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

42...c4 43.♗e2 ♔d6! 44.♖xh4 ♔c5!, and White simply can't move. It's dead equal. **40.♖xg5** 40.bxa4!? was also possible, but it's hard to say whether White has more chances, especially since Magnus had no time either: 40...♖xb2 41.♔xb2 ♗xa4 42.♖xg5 ♔f6 43.♖f5+ ♔e6, with enough compensation.

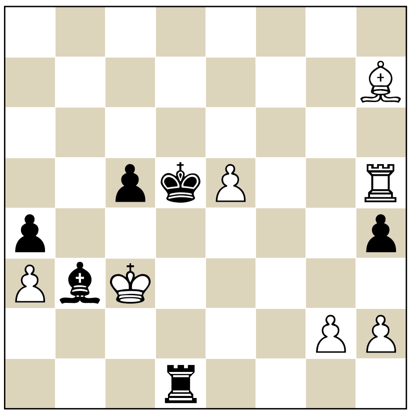
40...♖xb3+ 40...♔f6!? 41.♖f5+ ♔e6 would transpose to 40.bxa4 after 42.bxa4 ♖xb2 43.♔xb2 ♗xa4. As said before, Black is doing fine here. White has a very passive bishop and the black c-pawn is a serious asset.

41.♖xb3 ♗xb3



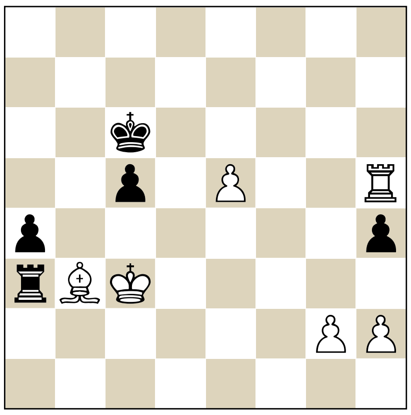
The time-trouble is over and yours truly was due to go and play his game in the European Team Championship. Seeing an 0.00 evaluation, I didn't doubt the outcome, especially since Vishy had enough time to figure it all out here. However, when standing in front of the elevator and discussing the position with a friend, I suddenly realized that the variation suggested by the computer was not entirely obvious. Still I would be lying if I said that I seriously considered the possibility of Anand losing this game.

42.♖xe5+ ♔d6 43.♖h5 ♖d1 44.e5+ ♔d5 45.♗h7



45...♖c1+? The check-and-go motif was common in the match. In the press conference after his escape in Game 4, Anand mentioned that this motif saved him in time-trouble by giving him two easy moves right before the time-controls on moves 40 and 60. In the next game, too, a check-and-go rook move landed Vishy in a lot of trouble.

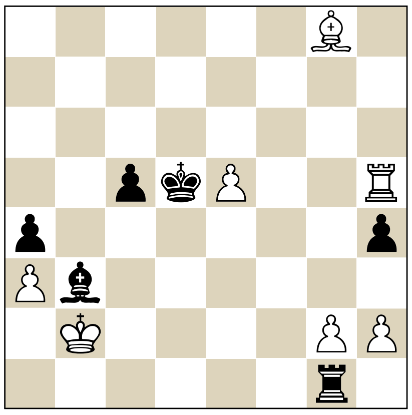
If Anand had considered the peculiar 45...♖a1! for more than a few seconds, he would definitely have noticed that here he has a simple draw: 46.♗g8+ ♔c6 47.♗xb3 (pushing the e-pawn wouldn't lead anywhere either) 47...♖xa3, and Black will easily make a draw in this rook endgame.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

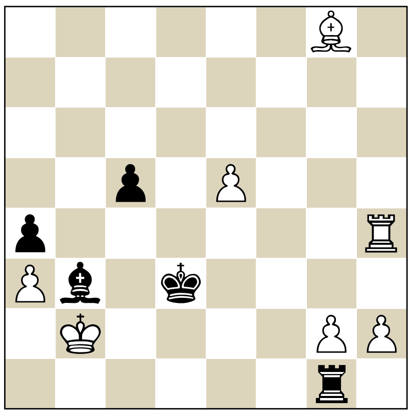
For example: 48.♖xh4 ♖xb3+ 49.♔c2, and here some commentators pointed out that 49...♖b4! is drawing, but that leaves the wrong impression, making it look as if Black was making a draw in a study-like way. In fact, any other sensible rook move, ...♖e3 or ...♖a3, also draws easily. I must say that, having analysed this game, I was somewhat confused. Most likely, Vishy thought that the draw could be achieved in any old way.

46.♔b2 ♖g1 47.♗g8+



47...♔c6

Interestingly enough, many commentators, including even Garry Kasparov, suggested the active 47...♔d4!?. But it is not entirely clear that this was an improvement: 48.♖xh4+ ♔d3!



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

49.♖g4!. Now I have to say that I didn't exhaustively analyse this position, as to reach an ultimate conclusion in such a complex rook endgame would require a lot of time. However, it seems to me that this is the way for White to continue:

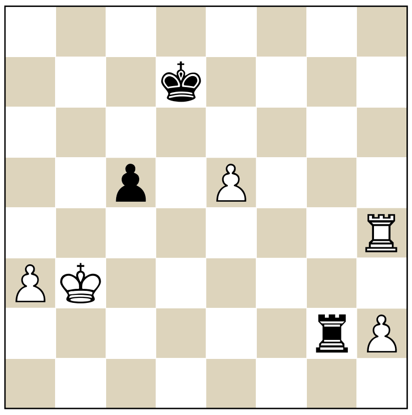
A) 49...♗xg8 50.♖xg8 ♖e1 51.♖d8+! ♔c4 52.♖d2! ♖xe5 53.g4!.

B) 49...♖f1 is the way to proceed and the ensuing position is most likely winning, at least from a practical point of view: 50.♗h7+ ♔d2 51.♖g6 ♔e3 52.♖d6. White has neutralized the c-pawn and will soon start pushing his pawns. Of course, the white king is still quite passive, so it's still a fight.

After 49.♖h3+ (instead of 49.♖g4) 49...♔d4 50.♗xb3 axb3 51.♖h4+ ♔d3 52.♔xb3 ♖b1+ 53.♔a2 ♖b8! the c-pawn is a huge asset. Just look at the next game, where the position was similar, colours were reversed and Black won! Here, of course, Black's activity is enough for a draw.

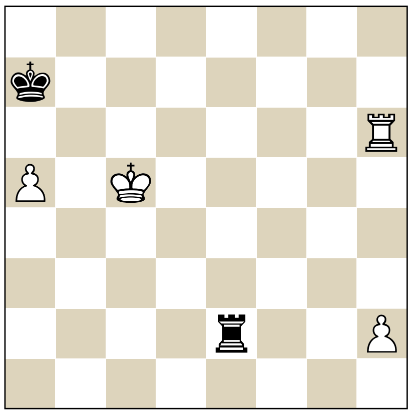
48.♖h6+ ♔d7 48...♔b5!? is more natural and probably as good: 49.♗xb3 axb3 50.♔xb3 ♖xg2 51.a4+ ♔a5 52.♖xh4 ♖e2, and I believe this will eventually lead to the drawn theoretical position that I will discuss in the comments to Black's 51st move: 53.♔c4 (53.♖h5 ♖e4!) 53...♖xe5 54.♖h8 ♔b6 55.♖h6+ ♔a7 56.a5 ♖e2 57.h4 ♖e4+ 58.♔xc5 with a draw.

49.♗xb3 axb3 50.♔xb3 ♖xg2 51.♖xh4



51...♔e6? Only after this move can I say with certainty that Anand is lost. I guess Vishy knew the drawn theoretical position, but just didn't realize that White would be able to prevent the black king from going back to stand in front of the a-pawn.

With 51...♖e2! the rook should have been sent on a mission to win the e-pawn and the king should be sent to stand in front of the a-pawn: 52.a4 ♖xe5 53.♔c4 ♔c6 54.♖h6+ ♔b7 55.a5 ♖e2 56.♔xc5 ♔a7.

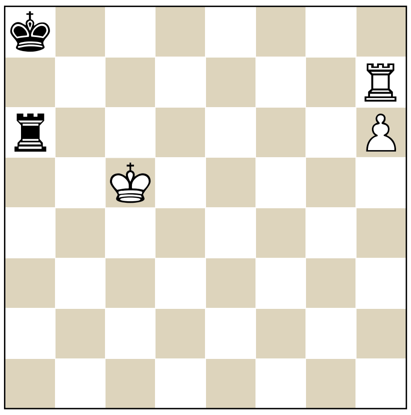


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

NEW IN CHESS

All over Chennai billboards praised Chief Minister Jayalalithaa Jayaram, both in Tamil and English. Many referred to the chess match with texts like 'You are always our Champion'.

This is the position Black should have aimed for. As Gupta explained in the live commentary, it is a theoretical draw. The way to defend is simple: Black should just keep the white rook tied to the h-pawn by attacking it from the side: 57.h3 ♖e3! 58.h4 ♖e4! 59.h5 ♖e5+! 60.♔b4 ♖g5 61.♖h7+ ♔a8 62.a6 ♖f5 63.h6 ♖f6! 64.♔b5 ♖g6 65.♔c5 ♖xa6



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

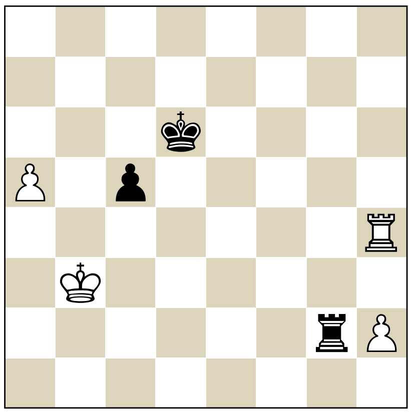
and now we are going to reach another theoretical position, the so-called Vancura position, very famous for being assessed wrongly back in the day. For more on theoretical endgames and history, I recommend *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual*. All I can tell you here is that White has no way to make any progress. E.g. 66.♔d5 ♖a5+ 67.♔e6 ♖a6+ 68.♔f5 ♖c6 69.♔g5 ♖c5+ 70.♔g6 ♖c6+ 71.♔g7 ♖c7+ 72.♔g8 ♖c8+ 73.♔g7 ♖c7+ 74.♔g6 ♖c6+, etc. The only question remaining is whether White, at the very beginning of this line (moves 52-55), is somehow able to move his rook from its passive position on the h-file while keeping his pawns, but I don't really see it. Perhaps we should give some endgame specialist a call. New In Chess certainly has the numbers of some of them in their phone list.

52.a4!

Now it's all over.

And not 52.♖h5? ♖g4 53.a4 ♖b4+ 54.♔a3 ♖b1.

52...♔xe5 53.a5 ♔d6



54.♖h7!

The only move, but winning enough! Now White prevents the theoretical position that we have discussed, and the win is easy.

54...♔d5 55.a6 c4+ 56.♔c3 ♖a2 57.a7

The rest is elementary; White will advance the h-pawn and win the game.

57...♔c5 58.h4

Black resigned. One up for Magnus!

NOTES BY

Anish Giri

RL 7.1 – C65

Vishy Anand

Magnus Carlsen

Chennai 2013 (6)

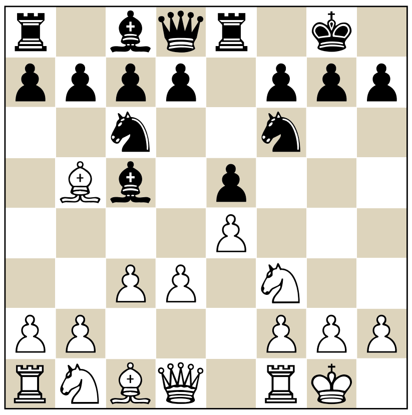
1.e4

Anand stays true to 1.e4. The whole professional world of chess held their breath. Would they refute the Berlin?

1...e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.d3

Nope, they didn't. Here's the anti-Berlin I mentioned in the comments to Game 4.

4...♗c5 5.c3 0-0 6.0-0 ♖e8!?

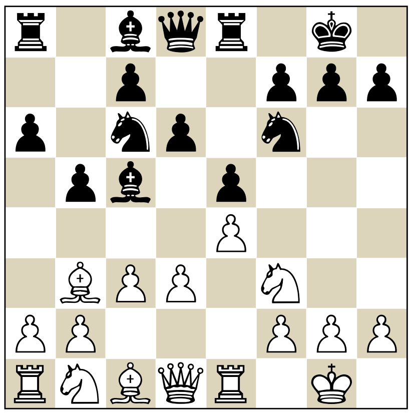


Magnus sticks to his opening strategy – surprise first, think later.

7.♖e1

In fact, 6...♖e8 had already been played against Anand this year, so the prepared Anand replied instantly.

7...a6 8.♗a4 b5 9.♗b3 d6



10.♗g5!

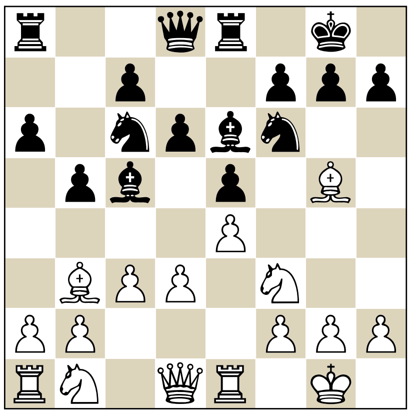
The favourite move of Magnus himself, in any possible d3 Spanish. Here it makes a whole lot of sense: the c5-bishop can no longer get back to

e7, so the pin is quite nasty. Surprisingly, in this particular position this move is a novelty, but the idea is obviously very well-known.
10.♘bd2 was seen in Anand-Aronian, Paris/St.Petersburg Alekhine Memorial 2013.

10...♗e6!

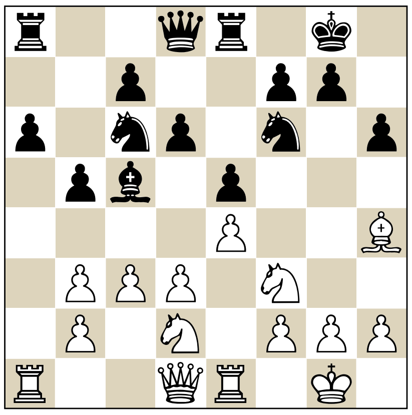
The exclamation mark is obviously not for the objective value of the move. Of course ...h6/...g5, which allows ♘xg5, was not an option against such a very well prepared opponent, so Magnus had to come up with something else to fight the nasty pin. Also note, if Vishy had looked at ...♗e6 after the inclusion of ...h6/♗h4, Magnus would also have gone ....♗e6 right away, almost certainly taking him out of book. That's class.

> 'Magnus sticks to his opening strategy: surprise first, think later.'



11.♘bd2 Very cautious.
11.♗xe6 was also a critical option: 11...fxe6, and now either a4, or b4 followed by a4 or, finally, 12.d4!? all seem to make sense and put some pressure on Black.
11.♗d5 also looks very strong at first sight, but here, after 11...♗xd5 12.exd5 ♘e7! 13.♗xf6 gxf6, it's far from clear what White has achieved. The position resembles a popular line of the Four Knights Opening, where Black allows ♗xf6 after ...♘e7 (Nisipeanu-Ponomariov, 2010).

11...h6 12.♗h4 ♗xb3 13.axb3



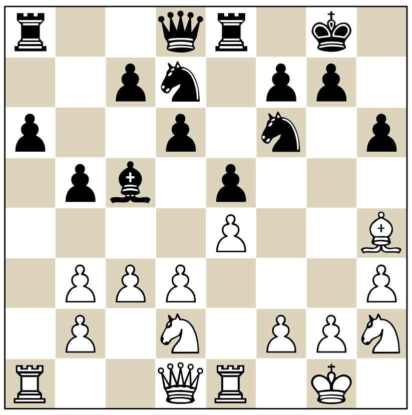
13...♘b8!?

Breyer style. By the way, the Breyer system in the Spanish was one of Magnus' pet openings in the past, so I assume that this manoeuvre came pretty naturally to him. Now White has to make sure he does something before Black finishes regrouping.

14.h3

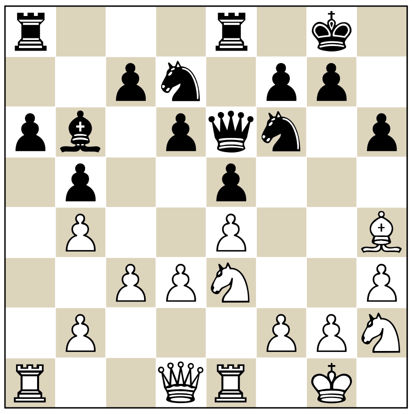
Again, very cautious. Slowly but surely White's chances to get any advantage will evaporate. On the other hand, I can't suggest anything concrete. After b4, Black will manage to get in ...a6-a5 in the long run, solving his only weakness, the a6-pawn. Alternatively, 14.d4 also leads nowhere. Something very sophisticated is required. Any suggestions?

14...♘bd7 15.♘h2



15...♕e7! The queen manoeuvre to e6 solves all problems. **16.♘df1** Eventually none of the knight manoeuvres will lead anywhere, but as I said, it is hard to suggest how White should have fought for an advantage. A sophisticated Ruy Lopez specialist is required and who is if not Anand?

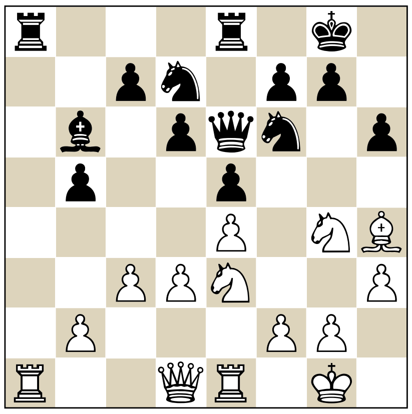
16...♗b6 17.♘e3 ♕e6 18.b4



18...a5!

Getting rid of the weakness.

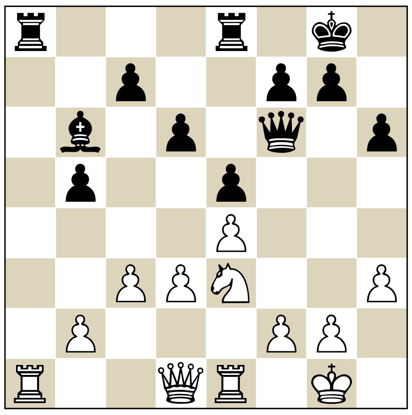
19.bxa5 ♗xa5 20.♘hg4 ♗b6



21.♗xf6!

Here Anand probably realized that his knight jumps will lead nowhere, as the bishop is left without any job on h4.
21.♕f3 seems natural, but after 21...♘xg4 22.♘xg4 ♘f8 it turns out that the bishop on h4 is out of place and Black will take over quite quickly, as no one is there to protect the queenside after, for example, ♖a2 or ♕b3.

21...♘xf6 22.♘xf6+ ♕xf6

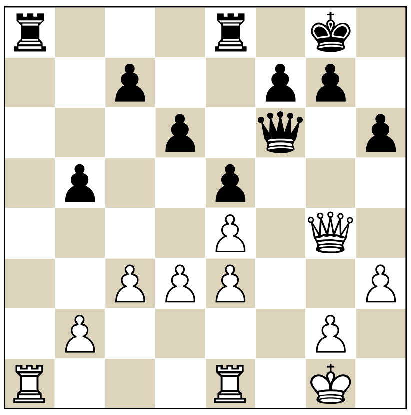


23.♕g4?!

Somewhat careless, but one can't say that White is in any real danger here. On the other hand, that's how Magnus wins. One inaccuracy, another inaccuracy, there is already some pressure, some time-trouble, and we have all the ingredients for a blunder.

23.♕e2 would have given Magnus no reason at all to even pretend, although I can imagine Vishy wanting Magnus to trade off the last minor piece. After 23...c6 24.g3 it's equal.

23...♗xe3 24.fxe3

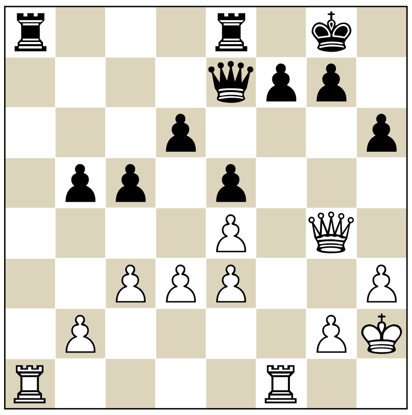


> 'That's how Magnus wins. One inaccuracy, another inaccuracy.'

24...♕e7!

Many would have played 24...♕e6, achieving symmetry and securing the +1 score, but Magnus already felt he was comfortable.

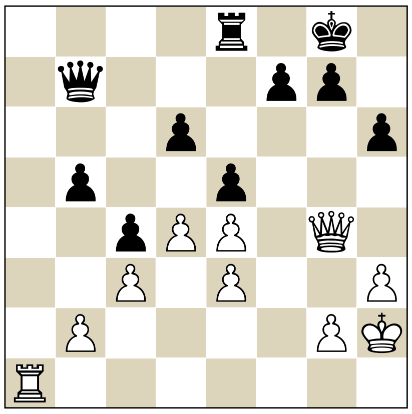
25.♖f1 c5 26.♔h2



26...c4

There was no need to hurry with this decision, but we are talking nanometres here.

27.d4 ♖xa1?! 28.♖xa1 ♕b7



29.♖d1

Giving Magnus that tiny symbolic plus that he wanted.

After 29.d5! it's hard for Black to do anything. White controls the only open file and if the rooks go off, it's a dead draw: 29...♖d8 (29...g6 30.♕h4 ♔g7 31.♖f1!, 29...♕b6 30.♕d7! and

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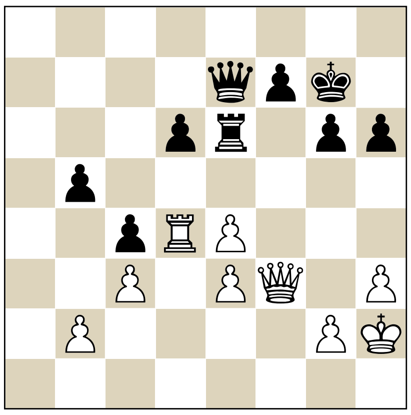
DAVID LLADA

A recurring scene. Guards and members of his entourage try to shield off Magnus Carlsen as he is beleaguerd by a mob of cameramen and journalists.

29...♖a8 30.♖xa8+ ♕xa8 31.♕d7 ♕b8 all lead to equality) 30.h4 ♕b6 31.♕f3 b4 32.h5, and it's just draw draw draw; even Magnus wouldn't be able to change that.

29...♕c6 30.♕f5 exd4 31.♖xd4 ♖e5 32.♕f3 ♕c7 33.♔h1 ♕e7 34.♕g4 ♔h7 35.♕f4 g6 36.♔h2 ♔g7 37.♕f3 ♖e6

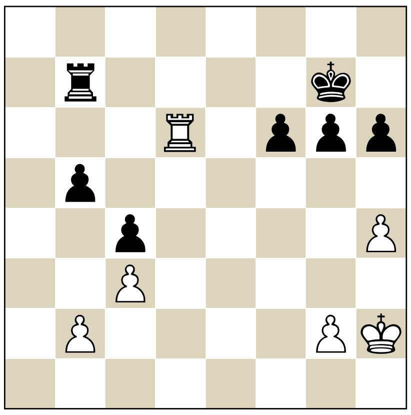


38.♕g3?!

There is no need to allow the rook ending, but I can imagine Anand preferring a drawn rook ending a pawn down to a symbolically worse position with more pieces on the board.

38.♕f4 ♖f6 39.♕g3 ♖e6 40.♕f4 h5 41.♕f3, and, well, at some point Black will have to come up with a clever idea, as I don't see how he wants to continue putting pressure on his opponent's position. But his position is still much more aesthetically pleasing, of course.

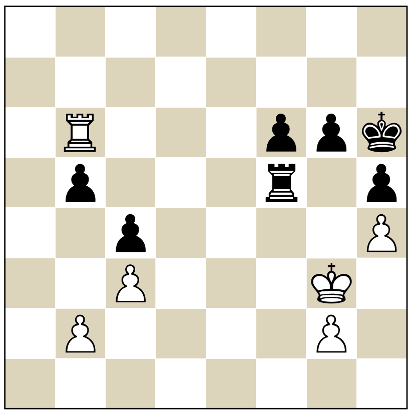
38...♖xe4 39.♕xd6 ♖xe3 40.♕xe7 ♖xe7 41.♖d5 ♖b7 42.♖d6 f6 43.h4



43...♔f7?

Allowing h5, which Magnus later regretted.

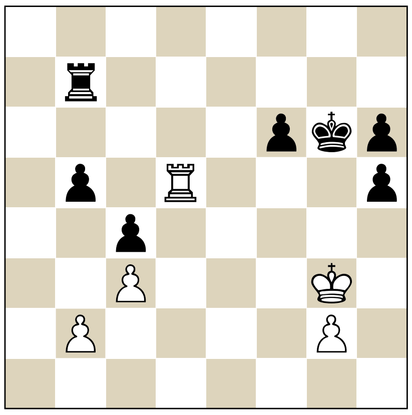
Instead, 43...h5! would have stopped White from sacrificing his pawn. Now Black's only plan is to transfer the rook to the 5th rank: 44.♔g3 ♖e7 45.♖b6 ♖e5 46.♖b7+ (46.♔f3 allows another plan, moving the king towards c7; 46...♖f5+ 47.♔e3 ♔f7 48.♖b7+ ♔e6 49.♖b6+ ♔d7 50.♖b7+ ♔c6 51.♖g7 g5 52.hxg5 ♖xg5, and White is under pressure) 46...♔h6 47.♖b6 ♖f5,



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

and Black has some prospects, for example 48.♔h3 g5 49.hxg5+ ♔xg5 50.♔g3 h4+ 51.♔h3 ♖d5 52.♖b8 f5, and some ideas similar to the game will appear. Here Black actually has a better version, so the rook ending isn't so simple after all, if Magnus had played 43...h5.

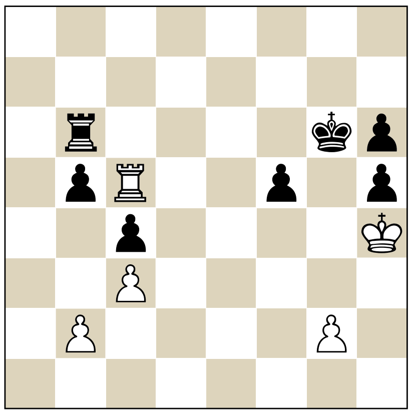
44.h5! gxh5 45.♖d5 ♔g6 46.♔g3



Now it is very hard for Black to make any real progress.

46...♖b6 47.♖c5 f5 48.♔h4

Not knowing what to do, Magnus activates his rook and king at the cost of a pawn.

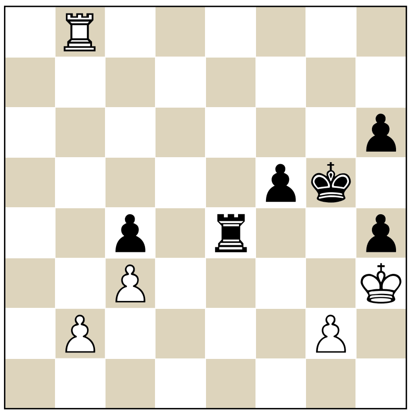


48...♖e6

In fact I don't think one can seriously consider Black's winning chances serious here, as White can even trade all the queenside pawns, after which the rook ending with f- and h-pawns is Black's dream. And that's a draw as well. So why would White lose this game?

Instead of the text-move, 48...♔f6! is somewhat trickier, when it is some sort of zugzwang. For example, 49.♔xh5 ♖e6! 50.♖xb5 ♖e2 51.♖b6+ ♔e5, and White has to pull himself together to save the game. Earlier on, he could also have played differently, though.

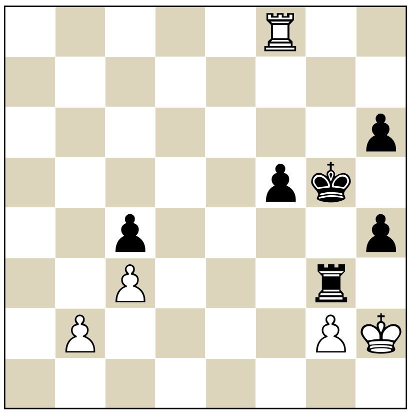
49.♖xb5 ♖e4+ 50.♔h3 ♔g5 51.♖b8 h4



52.♖g8+

52.b3!? is for lazy people and seems quite alright to me: 52...♖e3+ 53.♔h2 ♖xc3 54.bxc4 ♖xc4, and this looks like a dead draw. As I said, the f- and h-pawn ending is a dream, but I don't really see how Black would go about reaching it.

52...♔h5 53.♖f8 ♖f4 54.♖c8 ♖g4 55.♖f8 ♖g3+ 56.♔h2 ♔g5

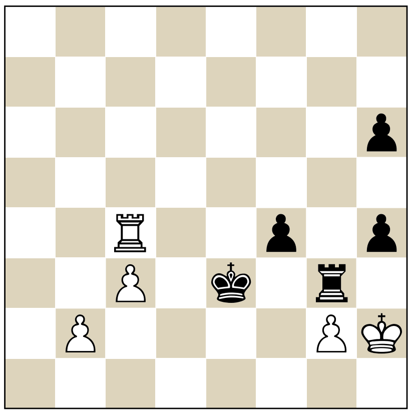


57.♖g8+

Basically, Anand just didn't understand what Magnus wanted from him and objectively he was correct. However, it slowly starts to look somewhat scary.

57.♖c8 would have maintained the status quo. Now no calculation is required to make a draw: 57...♖g4 58.♔h3 h5 59.♖c7.

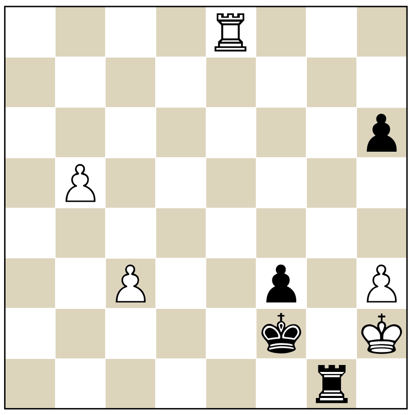
57...♔f4!? 58.♖c8 ♔e3 59.♖xc4 f4



60.♖a4??

Due to his queenside pawns White is not able to give side-checks in this position. Instead, he should have opted for checks from behind which, together with the advanced b-pawn, would secure the draw. Ironically enough, both players were convinced that White was already lost here. In hindsight, Anand's losses in the endgames in this game and the previous one seem just silly.

The right way to proceed was 60.b4! h3 61.gxh3 ♖g6 62.♖c8 f3 63.♖e8+ ♔f2 (63...♔d3 64.♖f8) 64.b5 ♖g2+ 65.♔h1 ♖g1+ 66.♔h2, and the point of b4 is shown here:

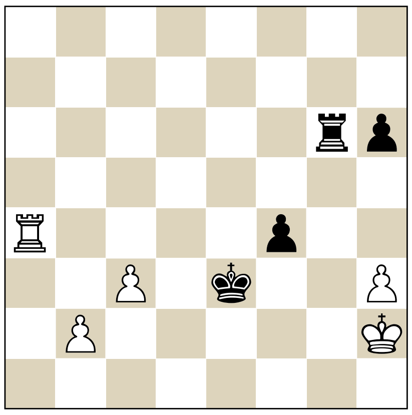


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

66...♖e1, and White is not too slow, as the players assumed: 67.♖xe1 (even the 'stupid' 67.♖a8 draws: 67...♔e3 68.♖e8+ ♔d2 69.♖f8 ♔e2 70.♖e8+ ♔f1 71.♖f8 – supposing that White can't exchange the rooks, even though he can ☺ – 71...f2 72.b6 ♔e2 73.b7 ♖b1 74.♖e8+ ♔d3 75.♖f8, and White is still in time) 67...♔xe1 68.b6 f2 69.b7 f1♕ 70.b8♕.

The premature 60.♖c8? is also a blunder, of course, as it allows 60...♔f2!.

60...h3 61.gxh3 ♖g6



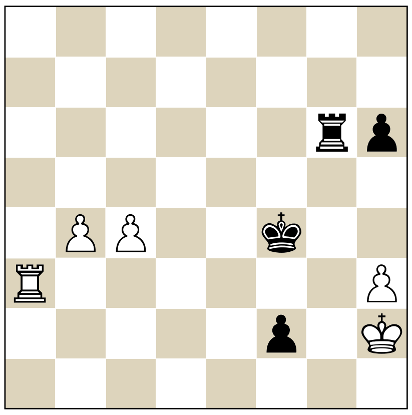
62.c4

And now White is indeed too slow: 62.♖a8 f3 63.♖e8+ ♔f2 64.b4 ♖g2+ 65.♔h1 ♖g1+ 66.♔h2 ♖e1 67.♖a8 ♔e3 68.♖e8+ ♔d2 69.♖f8 ♔e2 70.♖e8+ ♔f1 71.♖f8 f2, and Black wins.

62...f3 63.♖a3+ ♔e2 64.b4

Too many pawns hamper the side checks.

64...f2 65.♖a2+ ♔f3 66.♖a3+ ♔f4



67.♖a8

Anand may have missed 67.♖a1 ♖e6!.

67...♖g1

White resigned.

And now it was +2.

NOTES BY

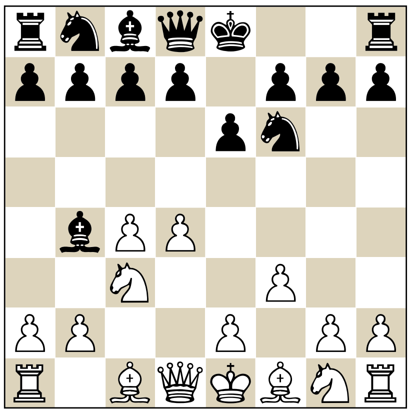
Anish Giri

NI 19.9 – E25
Vishy Anand
Magnus Carlsen
Chennai 2013 (9)

Before this game everyone knew that it was now or never. With –2 and four games to go this was Vishy's last chance to strike back. And he went for it.

1.d4! ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3
Frankly speaking, I had expected to see the Nimzo. With 3.♘f3 Vishy's team would have had a hard time to prepare, as it's not clear what to expect from Magnus there.

3...♗b4 4.f3

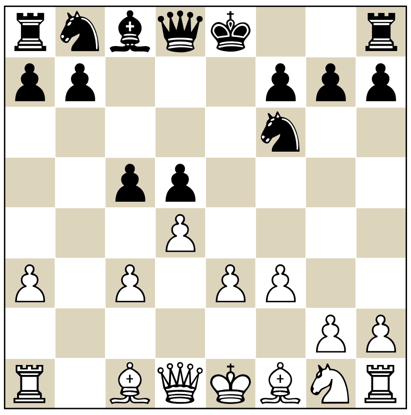


This line has served Anand well in the past. The play becomes terribly sharp, which is what Vishy was aiming for.

4...d5 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.bxc3 c5 7.cxd5 exd5!? All mainstream theory so far. Here Magnus, as usual, deviates from the main theoretical paths.

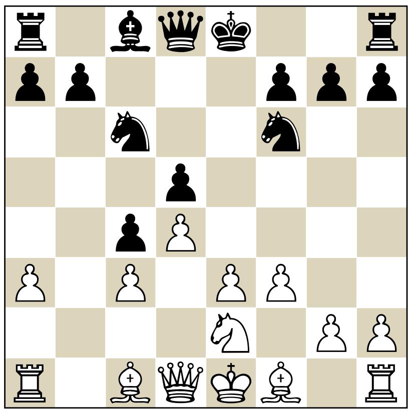
7...♘xd5 8.dxc5 has been discussed a lot at top level. See Anand-Kramnik 2008, Anand-Wang Hao 2011, etc. etc.

8.e3



8...c4 The relative popularity of this line is probably due to the rise of chess engines, which consider Black's position better here. As far as I know, it has been thought since the game Botvinnik-Capablanca from ages ago that closing the centre so quickly in such a pawn structure is far too dangerous, and that after the eventual e3-e4 break Black will be under serious attack. In our days, however, people realize that there is quite a considerable gap between serious attack and mate, and things are no longer that one-sided.

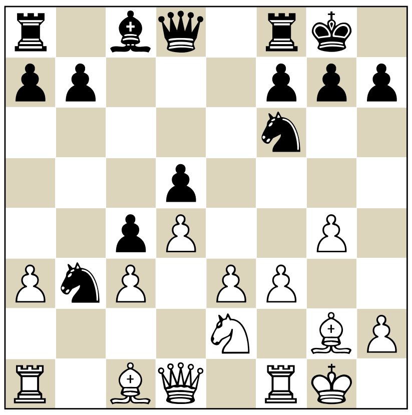
9.♘e2 ♘c6



10.g4!
Gaining space on the kingside, where the future attack will take place. In the long run White is aiming for e3-e4.

10.♘g3 doesn't look good here, as after 10...h5!? the white knight will be pushed back and it will be hard to manage the desired e4 break.

10...0-0 11.♗g2 ♘a5 12.0-0 ♘b3



13.♖a2 It is quite a subtle decision where to put the rook.

The advantage of having the rook protecting the c1-bishop can be seen in the following line: 13.♖b1 h6 14.♘g3

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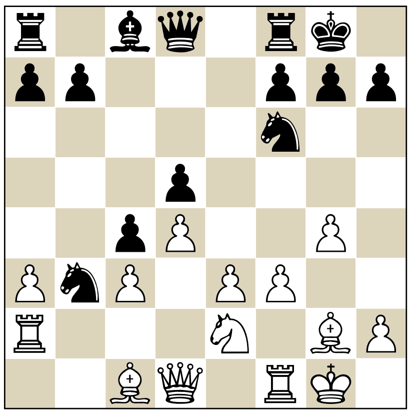
NEW IN CHESS

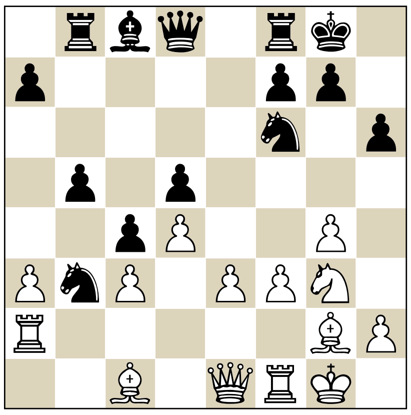
In Game 9 Vishy Anand finally played 1.d4 and attacked aggressively, a strategy many had hoped to see already in Game 7.

♖e8 15.h3 ♕d6, and here White has 16.♕e1! ♘xc1 17.♖xc1! (having the rook on b1 finally pays off) 17...♕xa3 18.e4 and the white pawns are rolling. The line is absolutely unforced, and the very first move, 13...h6, is probably inaccurate.



13...b5 Advancing his queenside pawns, hoping for the best. In general the black strategy in such positions is quite simple. He should pretend he doesn't care at all that he gets mated, create some silly counterplay on the queenside and hope that White will not find a forced mate.

13...h6 is the move preferred by the engines (and most players who have had this position over the board), which Kasparov in his comments on Twitter (the new evil in this world, next to Facebook, YouTube, the Internet and, of course – not to forget – the smileys ☺) classified as simply 'very bad': 14.♘g3 (14.e4!? right away is not that bad either: 14...dxe4 15.fxe4 ♗xg4 16.♕e1, and the pawn centre is worth a pawn. Oops, given away another novelty to NIC readers) 14...b5 15.♕e1 ♖b8 16.e4!? (a pawn sacrifice that was played in one correspondence game – White gets a very dangerous initiative) 16...♘xc1 17.♕xc1 dxe4 18.g5 hxg5 19.fxe4.



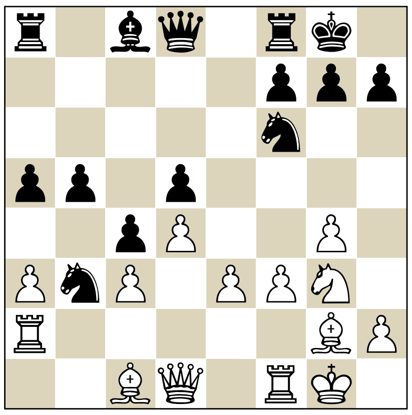
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

> 'He should pretend he doesn't care at all that he gets mated, create some silly counterplay on the queenside and hope that White will not find a forced mate.'

14.♘g3

14.g5 is also possible, but perhaps White didn't want to allow 14...♘h5!?.

14...a5



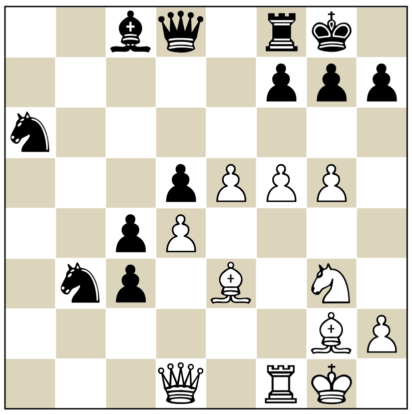
15.g5

The immediate 15.e4 was also interesting, but Black seems to be getting quite some counterplay here: 15...dxe4 16.♗g5 h6 17.♗xf6 ♕xf6 18.fxe4 ♕b6 19.g5 ♖a6!? 20.e5 b4!, breaking down the essential c3/d4 tandem.

15...♘e8 16.e4 ♘xc1

Personally I don't like this decision, although it is by no means bad, especially if Magnus decided that he should do it. Black exchanges his active knight, fearing that the knight might end up doing nothing on the juicy b3-square (again Botvinnik-Capablanca comes to mind).

The scenario that might unfold would be: 16...♘c7 17.♗e3 ♖a6!? (17...b4 18.axb4 axb4 19.♖xa8 ♘xa8 20.cxb4) 18.e5 b4 19.axb4 (19.f4 ♘b5; 19.a4 bxc3 20.f4) 19...axb4 20.♖xa6 ♘xa6 21.f4 bxc3 22.f5



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

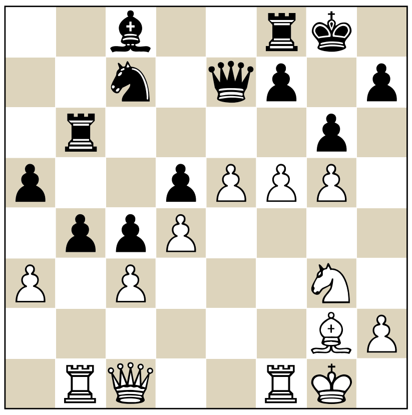
and the pawns look scary, just as in the game.

17.♕xc1 ♖a6 18.e5

The most straightforward. White wants to follow up with f4-f5.

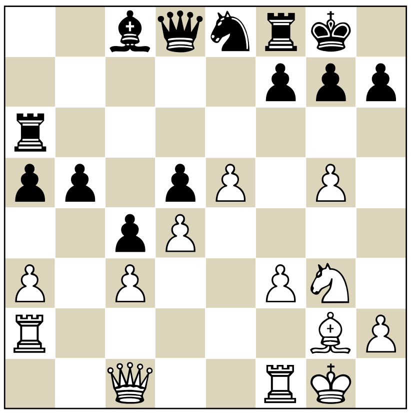
18.f4 is not so conceptual: 18...dxe4 (18...b4) 19.♘xe4 b4, with counterplay.

18.♖b2!? was suggested by Kasparov. A cautious move, taking care of the counterplay first. However, it wouldn't change the character of the fight too much, as after 18...♘c7 19.e5 ♕e7 20.♖b1 ♖b6! 21.f4 b4! White would still have no easy mate: 22.f5 g6!

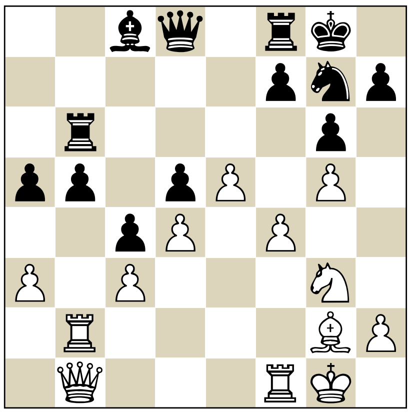


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

and it's not easy to continue with the attack, the counterplay is still there. Obviously, just as in the game, White's attack is very powerful here, too.

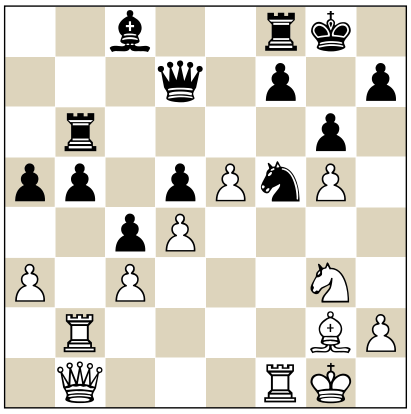


18...♘c7?!
Magnus decided to go all out for counterplay, thinking that the planned ...g6 and ...♘g7 wouldn't work.
Magnus's initial intention 18...g6! was, after all, safer: 19.f4 ♘g7. Now Carlsen noticed the powerful shift of focus by White's major pieces: 20.♖b2! ♖b6 21.♕b1



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

and now there is only one move, which is terribly awkward: 21...♕d7!, and it still is hard for White to do anything. The only sensible move seems to be 22.f5, when after 22...♘xf5 White can take on f5 with knight, rook or bishop (♗h3!?), but in all cases Black seems to be holding his ground:



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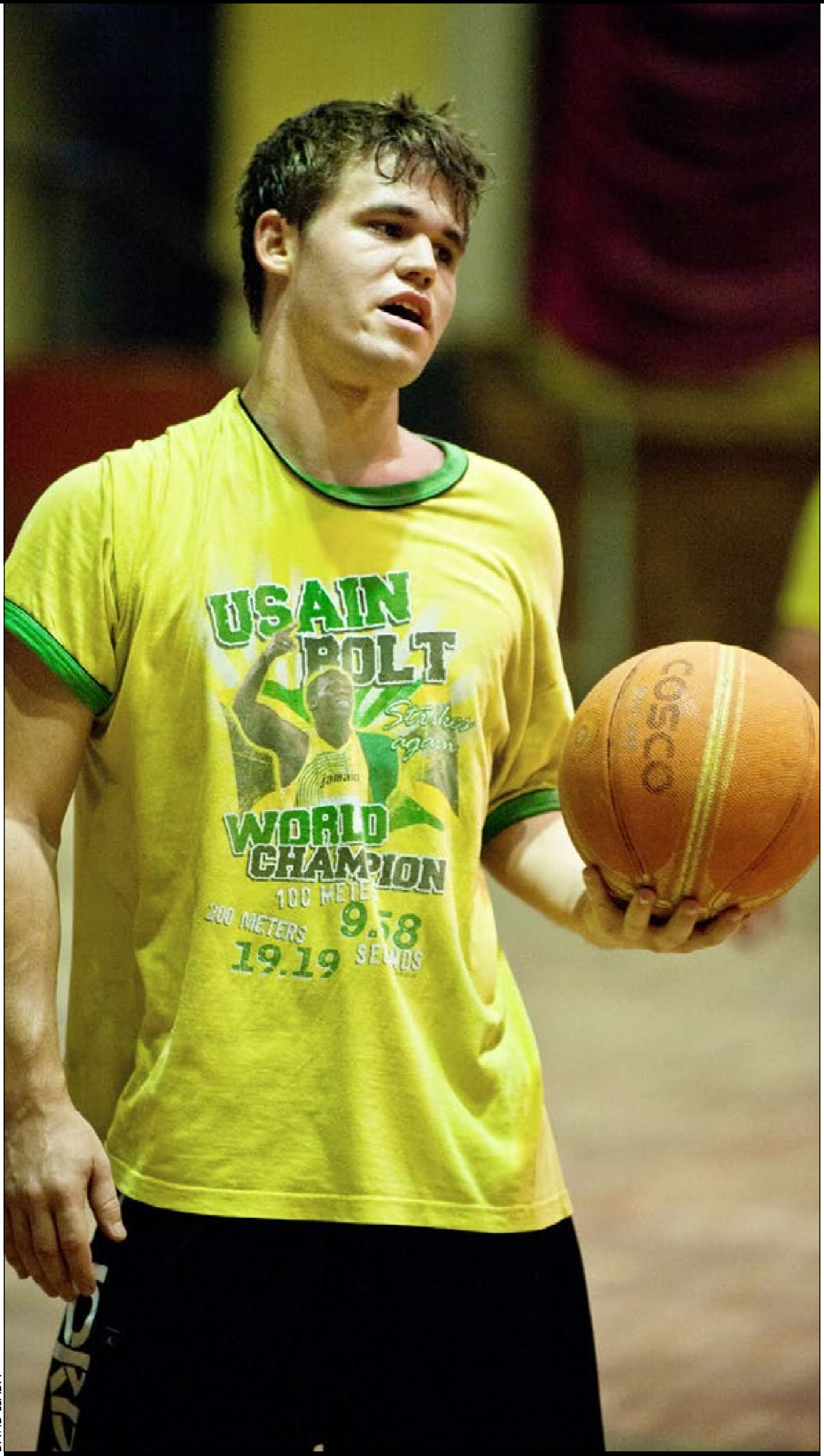
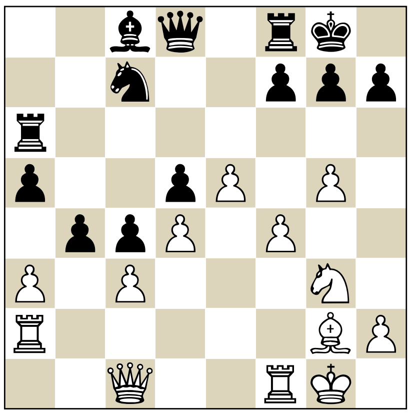


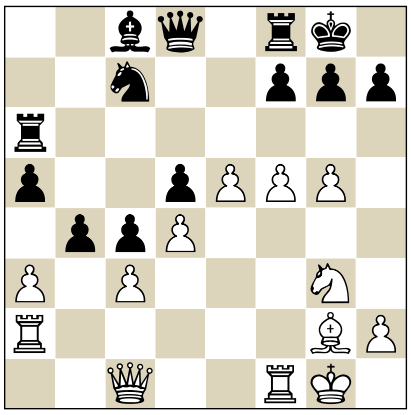
DAVID LLADA

The day after he won the World Championship, Magnus Carlsen chose to unwind playing football and basketball.

23.♖xf5!? (23.♗h3 ♕e7!; 23.♘xf5 gxf5) 23...gxf5 24.♘h5 b4 25.axb4 (25.♘f6+ ♖xf6 26.gxf6 b3 27.♗f3 ♔h8) 25...axb4 26.♖xb4 ♖xb4 27.♕xb4 ♕b7.
18...b4!? was proposed by Nigel Short, who said that a player with a good sense of danger would seriously consider this option. That looks interesting, but I don't think Black will be having fun if White simply ignores the pawn advance: 19.f4! (19.axb4 gives Black quite decent counterplay against the d4-pawn: 19...axb4 20.♖xa6 ♗xa6 21.cxb4 ♕b6 22.♕c3 ♘c7) 19...b3 (this doesn't help Black; with all rooks still on the board the b-pawn doesn't play such a big role) 20.♖af2 g6 21.f5.
19.f4 Now White will have all the fun. **19...b4**

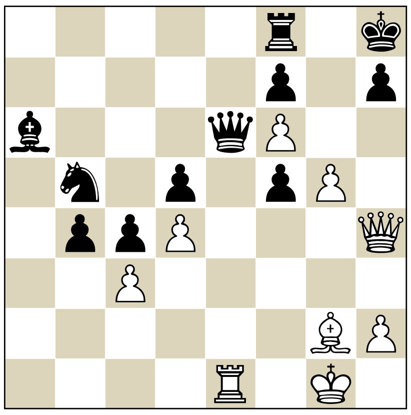


20.axb4?! Many strong players criticized this move. And indeed, White had more challenging options by keeping all the rooks on the board. 20.f5! is very dangerous, especially since the logical 20...♘b5 is just not working.



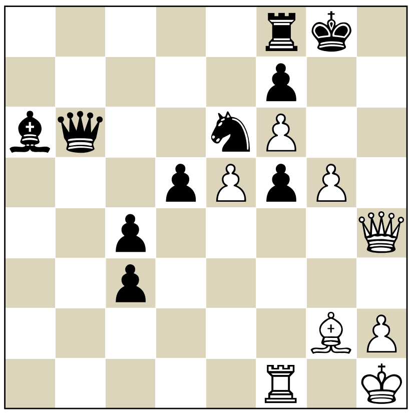
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 20...♘b5? 21.axb4 axb4 22.♖xa6 ♗xa6 23.f6 g6 24.♕f4!. Now Black is lost. He is just too late to prevent the eventual mate: 24...♕b6 (24...bxc3 25.e6! wins easily). A clever try, but it won't help: 25.♕h4 (25.♘f5!! also wins: 25...gxf5 – 25...h5 26.♖e1!!, don't ask me why – 26.♕h4 ♔h8 27.e6 ♕xe6 28.♖e1, and the rook joins the attack:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

28...♕c6 29.g6 fxg6 30.♖e7) 25...h5! 26.♘xh5 bxc3! (a good try, but White wins anyway) 27.♔h1 (27.♘f4 ♘xd4!, and Black suddenly survives, as he plays ...♘f5) 27...♘xd4 28.♘g3 ♘e6 29.♘f5! gxf5

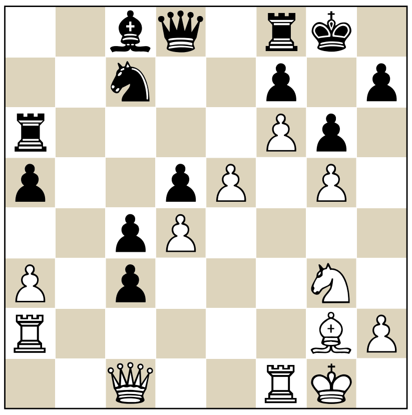


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

30.♕h5!! (30.♕h6 would be met by 30...♕e3). Now g6 is unstoppable. White wins!;

B) Quite dubious is 20...b3?! 21.♖af2 a4 22.♘h5, as the b-pawn won't be a worry for White, who has an extra rook to take care of it, compared to the situation in the game;

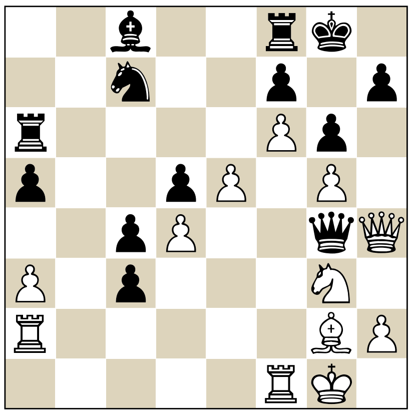
C) Maybe the best try is 20...bxc3!, hoping to get some counterplay against the d4-pawn: 21.f6 g6:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

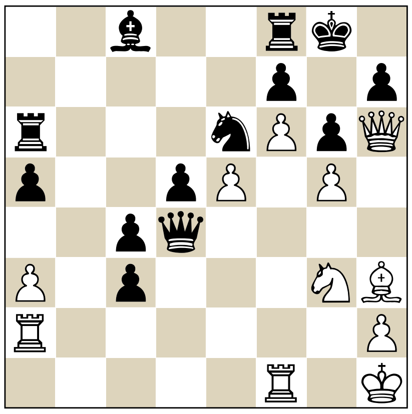
C1) 22.♕xc3! Simple and strong. White wants to get the b-file and establish positional domination;

C2) 22.♕f4 is critical, but here Black seems to have a brilliant defence: 22...♕d7!!. The only way, otherwise ♕h4 will lead to mate. 23.♕h4 (23.h3 ♖d8! 24.♕h4 ♕e8, and the queen is in time to reach the f8-square) 23...♕g4!. The point. Now it's a miracle that Black holds, but he seems to be doing so:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

24.♕h6 ♕xd4+ 25.♔h1 (25.♖af2 ♘e8 26.♔h1 c2! Black aims to eliminate the f6-pawn: 27.♘e2 – 27.♖xc2 ♖b6! 28.♘e2 ♕xe5 29.♘f4 ♘xf6 30.gxf6 ♖xf6 – 27...♕xe5 28.♖f4 ♖xf6 29.gxf6 ♕e3 30.♘c1 ♘xf6, and Black survives) 25...♘e6 26.♗h3. This looks like mate, but no way:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

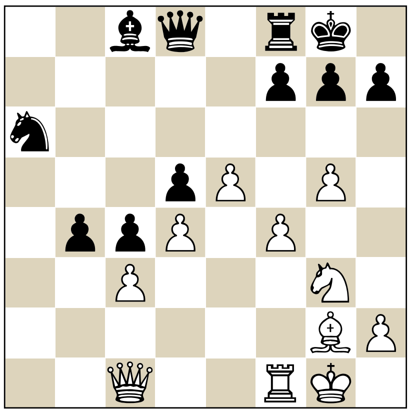
26...♖a7!! 27.♖e2. Now ♘f5 looks like a deadly threat, but Black can still fight on: 27...c2!! 28.♖xc2 ♕e3 29.♘f5 ♕xg5 30.♕xg5 ♘xg5 31.♘e7+ ♖xe7 32.fxe7 ♗xh3 33.exf8♕+ ♔xf8. The lines are of course surreal; all they teach us is that chess is ungraspable.

Finally, 20.a4!? was suggested by many strong players, including Nigel Short and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave. White has such a dangerous initiative that he can indeed afford to make one such slow move. Black would have had a tough time here trying to find counterplay.

20...axb4 21.♖xa6 ♘xa6

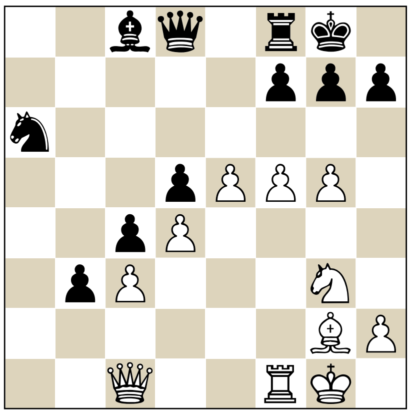
VG
KONGEN
BLI MED PÅ SJAKKFESTEN!
VG
Nå er lille Magnus KONGEN
VG
KONGEREKKEN
VÅR NYE KONGE
BLI MED PÅ SJAKKFESTEN!
VG
KONGEN

The Norwegian tabloid *VG*, one of the sponsors of Magnus Carlsen, let their readers decide on the cover of the newspaper on The Day After. 46,470 readers voted, 46.1% wanted to see the Champ rise in triumph from the swimming pool after he'd been thrown into the water by his team.



22.f5 As Anand pointed out, 22.cxb4 would have been safer, but as he added right away, it was also safer for Black: 22...♘xb4 23.f5 ♕b6 24.♕c3 ♘c6 with counterplay against the central pawns.

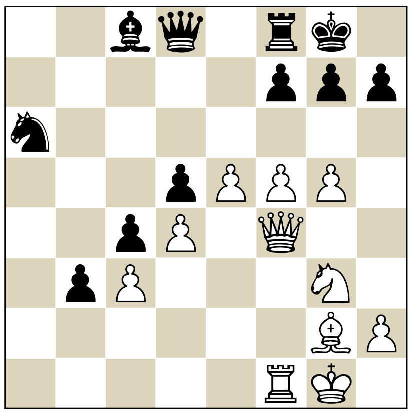
22...b3!? With just one rook left for White, the b-pawn is a serious asset. White would like to involve all his major pieces into the attack, but then the b-pawn will be a nuisance.



23.♕f4?! After a terribly long think, and unable to find a forced win, Anand finally played this move. As far as I understand, he underestimated the ...♘c7-e8 defence and was hoping for 23...♔h8 here.

Instead he should have played even more cautiously. 23.h4! would have put Magnus under a lot of pressure, as Black doesn't really have counterplay with his pieces so badly coordinated. 23.f6 g6 24.♕f4 ♘c7 transposes to the game. Anand wanted to avoid 24...♔h8, which also seems to be good for Black: 25.♕h4 b2! 26.♕h6 ♖g8 27.♖f4 b1♕+ 28.♗f1 ♕d1! (the same motif as in the game) 29.♖h4 ♕h5 30.♘xh5 gxh5 31.♕xh5 ♗f5 32.♕xf7 ♘c7!.

So, best was 23.h4!, and now White can afford to take his time and make two moves with his h-pawn. There is no forced mate yet, but it is simply not clear how Black should proceed. An attempt to ask White to clarify things would be: 23...g6!? (23...♘c7 24.h5!) 24.h5, and White can just continue to play slowly: 24...♘c7 25.♔h2, and it's hard for Black to make a move. Taking everything off on f5 is still dangerous and otherwise the ideas of ♕f4 and f6 are always there anyway.



23...♘c7! 23...♔h8 is bad indeed: 24.♘h5! ♘c7 25.e6 fxe6 26.♘xg7!, and Black is under a serious attack here: 26...♔xg7 27.f6+ ♔f7 28.♕h4. This is just devastating.

24.f6 Again forcing the play, but this is merely enough for a draw.

24.♕h4!?, keeping the tension, was Kasparov's suggestion. This was indeed a better try, but Black can force matters anyway and play 24...g6!?. Now 25.f6 would transpose to the game, and if White inverts the moves, 25.♕h6, Black goes 25...♗xf5! 26.♖xf5 ♕e7!!, and the mighty computer claims that the b-pawn is worth a piece. Indeed, White's attack has been slowed down and Black will have some serious counterplay thanks to his advanced protected passed pawn. The question is, though, who would have played this way with black? And if not 24...g6, then Black would have serious trouble finding a good move, as White still keeps the idea of f6 (and ♘h5).

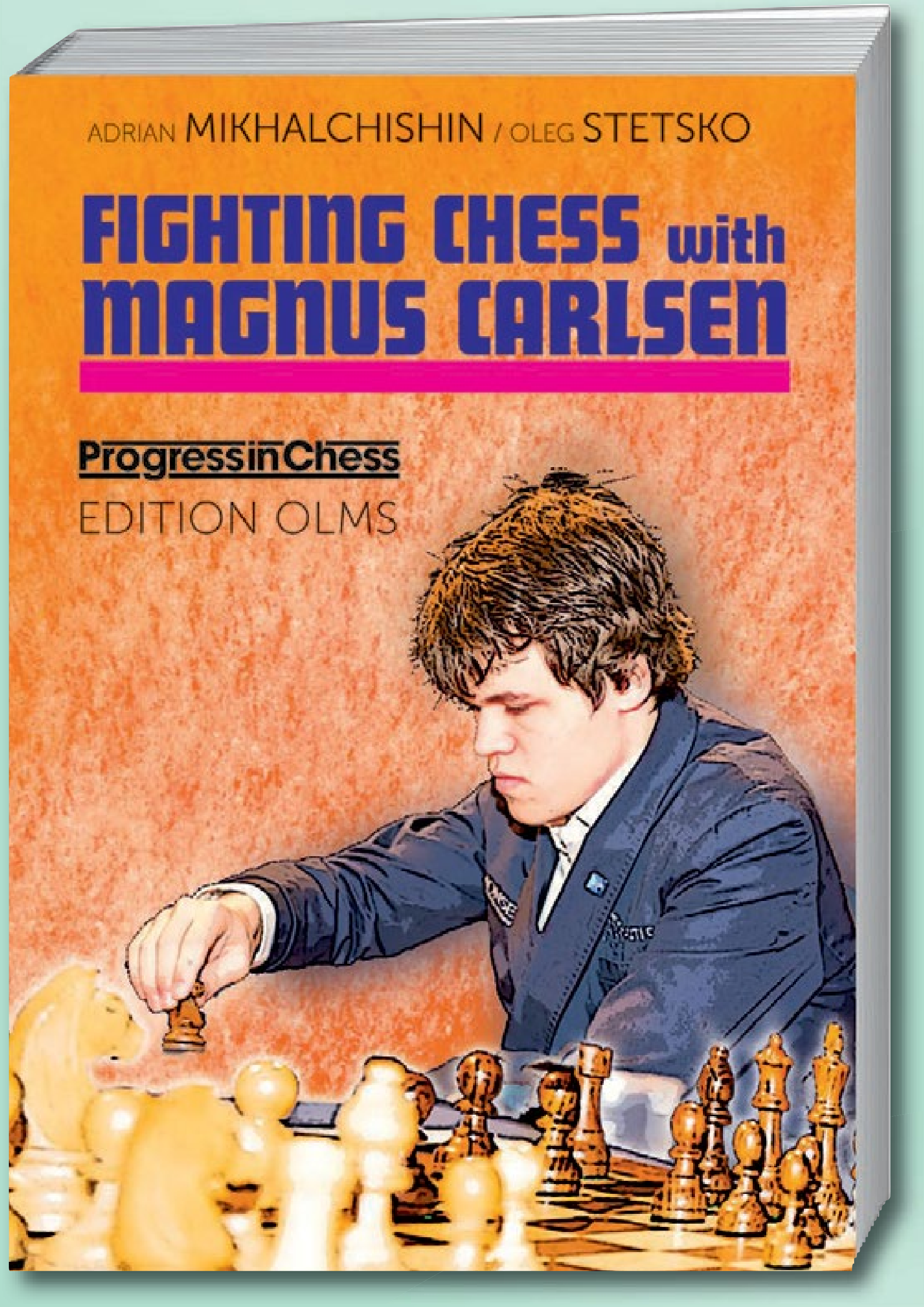
24...g6

Magnus was aiming for this position anyway, so he didn't seriously consider 24...gxf6, which was another option.

After 24...gxf6 25.exf6 (25.♘h5 was pointed out by Magnus, as well as the brilliant defensive line 25...fxg5 26.♘f6+ ♔h8 27.♕xg5 ♖g8!, and while Magnus was saying that it's not so clear, he must have realized that Black is winning here) 25...♔h8 26.h4 ♖g8 Black survives.

25.♕h4 ♘e8!

“Magnus is a Force of Nature whose time has come.“ – GARRY KASPAROV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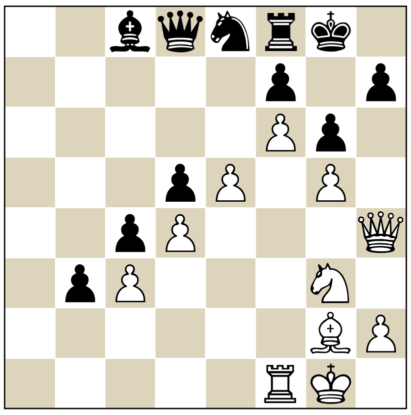
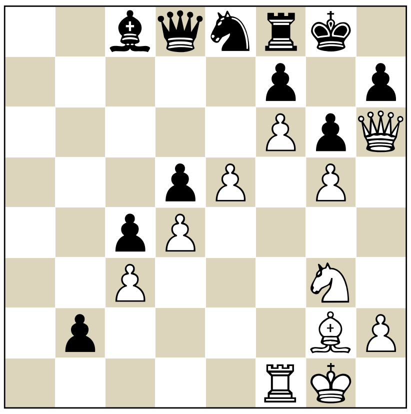


26.♕h6

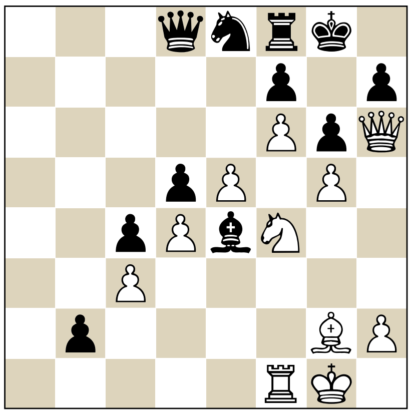
26.♘e2!? was another way to continue with the initiative, but Black is fine: 26...♗e6 27.♘f4 ♕a5. Now White has options, but the position is objectively equal, for example: 28.♗h3 (28.♘xe6 fxe6 29.♗h3 ♘c7 30.f7+ ♖xf7 31.♖xf7 ♔xf7 32.♕xh7+) 28...♗xh3 29.♕xh3 b2 30.♘e6 (30.e6 ♘d6 31.♘xg6 hxg6 32.♕h6 ♘f5 33.♖xf5 b1♕+ 34.♖f1 ♕xf1+ 35.♔xf1 ♕a1+) 30...♕a1 31.♘xf8 ♔xf8 32.e6 ♘d6! 33.♕h6+ ♔e8 34.exf7+ ♘xf7 35.♕h3! ♔d8 36.♕g2 b1♕ 37.♕xd5+ ♔c8 38.♕e6+ ♔d8 39.♕d5+ ♔c8 40.♕e6+, and as all the analyses done with the computer, it ends in perpetual check.

26...b2!



27.♖f4

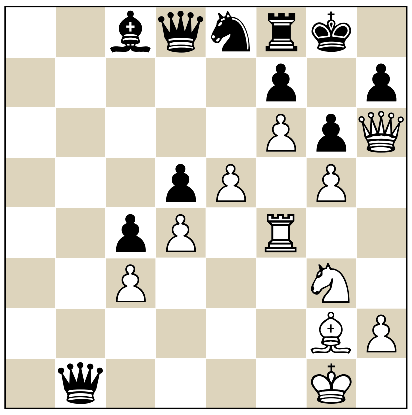
Forcing the play completely, but there still was the idea of the move discussed in the previous note: 27.♘e2!? ♗f5 (27...♗e6 with the pawn already on b2 is a bit risky. After 28.♘f4 ♕a5 29.♘xe6 fxe6 30.♗h3 ♕a6 31.♗g4 ♖f7 32.♕h3 ♘c7 33.♕g2 the black pieces are all pretty much tied down and Black risks losing the b2-pawn, though after 33...♕a2 34.♕c2 ♖f8! he seems to be surviving again: 35.f7+ ♔g7 36.♕f2 h5!) 28.♘f4 ♗e4.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

The position is totally out of control, but with perfect play it ends in a perpetual as well: 29.h4 (29.e6 ♘xf6!) 29...♗xg2 30.♔xg2 ♕b8 31.e6 (31.♖b1 ♕b3) 31...b1♕ 32.♖xb1 ♕xf4! 33.e7 ♕e4+. Quite a peculiar position, but it's perpetual check.

27...b1♕+

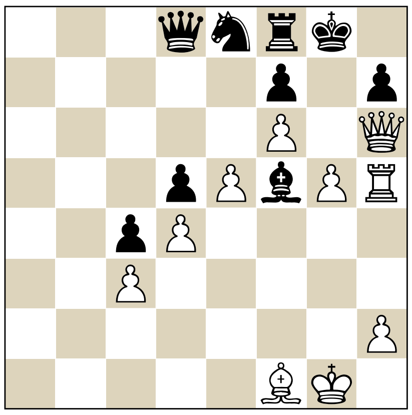


28.♘f1??

I perfectly know this feeling. When the win is so needed and not there, any hallucination is very welcome. Calculating 28.♗f1 over and over Anand couldn't find a way, and then, when he suddenly thought of blocking the check with the knight, he thought he had found it.

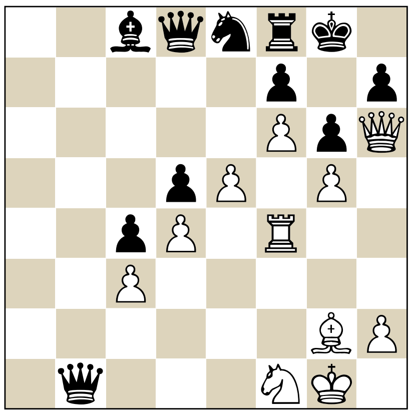
Obviously there was no emotional energy left to double check, and only when he made the move did he realize what he had done.

28.♗f1 was the move, and now the play is forced: 28...♕d1! 29.♖h4 ♕h5! 30.♘xh5 gxh5 31.♖xh5 (31.♗h3? doesn't work, as Anand pointed out: 31...♗xh3 32.♖xh3 ♕b6 33.♖xh5 ♕b1+ 34.♔g2 ♕g6!) 31...♗f5!.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Here both players missed a spectacular way to stalemate all the black pieces: 32.g6!! (32.♗h3 was suggested by the players, and after the forced 32...♗g6 33.e6! ♘xf6! – 33...fxe6 34.♗xe6+ ♖f7 35.♖h3, winning – 34.gxf6 ♕xf6 it is indeed Black who has some advantage: 35.♖e5 fxe6 36.♕e3 ♗f7) 32...♗xg6 33.♖g5, and now it is Black who has to make a draw: 33...♘xf6! 34.exf6 ♕xf6 35.♖xd5 ♕f3 36.♖c5 ♕xc3 37.♖xc4, with a draw.



28...♕e1!

Anand had correctly seen that 28...♕d1?? would lose here: 29.♖h4 ♕h5 30.♖xh5 gxh5 31.♘e3! ♗e6 32.♗xd5!, and Black is lost. But there obviously is this other defence, and now White is absolutely lost, so he resigned. ■

Chennai 2013

				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		TPR
Magnus Carlsen	IGM	NOR	2870	½	½	½	½	1	1	½	½	1	½	.	.	6½	2885
Viswanathan Anand	IGM	IND	2775	½	½	½	½	0	0	½	½	0	½	.	.	3½	2760

A Chess Player's Brain is a Muscle

Why Anand lost and Carlsen won

FIDE
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NEW IN CHESS

In our previous issue **Sergey Shipov** tried to come to grips with the daunting challenge of 'How to beat Magnus Carlsen'. In a brilliant essay the Russian grandmaster and Internet commentator reached conclusions about the Norwegian's play and Anand's chances that featured prominently in the first press releases from Chennai. Now that the match is over, Shipov gives his compelling take on what he and we saw. With razor-sharp observations, his résumé is sometimes harsh, often incredulous, but most of all, always fascinating.

The clash between Anand and Carlsen has given much food for thought. Allow me to share my observations and conclusions.

I will be frank.

Carlsen won the title routinely, almost impassively. I think that he had not a shadow of doubt about his own success. He sensed his superiority and calmly played chess. Essentially Magnus took that which belongs to him by right – already for a long time he has been deemed the best in the world. It only remained to carry out the last formalities.

Yes, this sounds rather hurtful for Anand. But after his colourless match with Gelfand and his performances in tournaments, performances which have been too modest for a champion, such sharp assessments have a right to exist. The contrast between the players was too great.

Of course, I remember the pre-match judgements of many experts (including some great players), according to which the match would be difficult and roughly equal. I remember it being said that Anand has his pluses, the arguments about Carlsen's lack of match experience, and so on.

Personally I perceived such judgements to be a way of expressing solidarity with the champion, whom everyone was criticizing. They were, above all, words of enormous respect for Anand, and, possibly, it was an attempt at a mental level to restrain somewhat the lively Norwegian, who so audaciously and brutally had changed the previous hierarchy in the chess world.

But the miracle did not happen.

Generally speaking, a match for the World Championship is like an enormous iceberg, and the spectators only see its tip, i.e. the games played. The greater part of the important events, influencing the outcome of the match, are not visible from the side. But the real battle for a result begins long before the start of the first game.

As is well known, a highly important role in achieving success is played by...

The Team

This is a broad concept. The team comprises numerous people, assisting a player in all aspects of preparation. But I will concentrate on opening work.

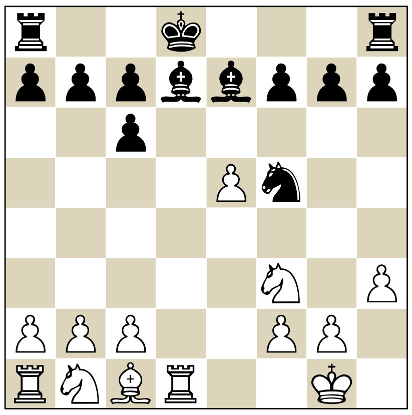
In Anand's previous three victorious matches his chess brigade worked excellently. But in Chennai, in my view, it failed. To all appearances, the champion was unable to find equivalent replacements for those who had left. He clearly missed Kasimdzhanov's Eastern cunning and Nielsen's solidity.

I cannot imagine that the previous team would have allowed the scandalous fact that three times Vishy unsuccessfully beat his head against the Berlin Wall.

The fourth game was especially surprising:

Vishy Anand
Magnus Carlsen
Chennai 2013 (4)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.0-0 ♘xe4 5.d4 ♘d6 6.♗xc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 ♘f5 8.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 9.h3 ♗d7 10.♖d1 ♗e7

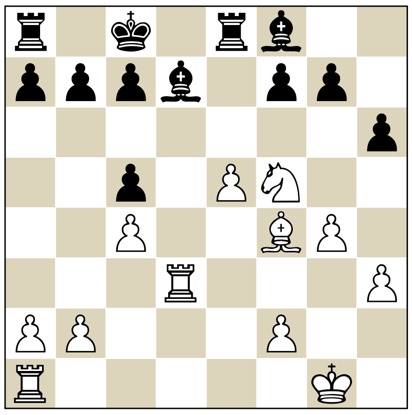


Your attention please, here is a question.

Previously the Berlin Variation was played several times as Black by Carlsen himself, and the given branch of the variation was employed three times by one of the challenger's seconds – Hammer. Was it not possible to prepare seriously for such a choice by Black?

11.♘c3

Here is another question. A day earlier, in the European Team Championship, there was the game Caruana-Grischuk, in which the given line also occurred. There White immediately revealed his cards: 11.g4 ♘h4 12.♘xh4 ♗xh4 13.♘d2 (this is one of the ideas of keeping the knight on b1) 13...♔c8 14.♘f3 ♗e7 15.♖d3 h6 16.♘d4 ♖e8 17.♗f4 c5 18.♘f5 ♗f8 19.c4,



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

but his activity did not bear fruit – 19...a6! 20.♘e3 b5 21.b3 g5! 22.♗g3 ♗e6 and Black obtained good counterplay.

It can be asked, how could a serious team of several people overlook this game? After all, it confirmed the topicality of this variation and provided field for research. Besides, Vishy is in fact well known for always noting all important new games and absorbing the ideas expressed in them. This even gave rise to the following observation: every important opening idea is employed on the second occasion by Anand.

On this occasion the all-seeing eye did not operate.

11...♔c8 12.♗g5 h6 13.♗xe7 ♘xe7 14.♖d2

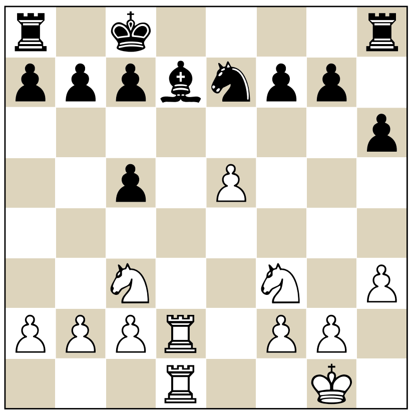
In Berg-Hammer, Achaea 2012, there followed 14.a4 a5 (14...b6 15.a5!) 15.♖d2 c5 16.♖ad1 ♗c6 (here I would have expected of Carlsen the novelty 16...♗e6) 17.e6! fxe6 18.♘e5 ♖e8 19.♘b5 ♗xb5 20.axb5 ♘d5 21.c4 ♘b6 22.h4 a4, and now by 23.♖d3! White could have gained an advantage.

14...c5

And this position occurred six years ago. In ancient times, it can be said.

15.♖ad1

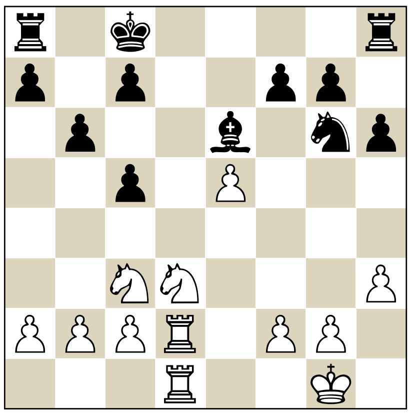
A novelty without the newness effect. Black also could not complain about the outcome of the opening in Jakovenko-Almasi, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007: 15.♘e4 b6 16.♘g3 ♗c6 (16...♘g6 17.♖e1 ♗c6 18.♘h2) 17.♘h2 ♘g6 18.♖e1 ♘f4 19.f3 ♔b7 etc.



15...♗e6!

But Magnus's preparation is a good one. If 15...♗c6, then 16.e6! would have presented a danger.

16.♘e1?
A flight to nowhere. Possibly Vishy saw this manoeuvre in the analysis of a similar variation. And he employed it at an inappropriate moment. Mixed things up...
The standard move 16.♘e2 was far stronger. In this case 16...♗xa2 is dubious in view of 17.b3 c4 18.♘fd4 a6 19.♘c3 c5 20.♘xa2 cxd4 21.♖xd4 cxb3 22.cxb3 ♘c6 23.♖c1, with the initiative for White. Therefore if 16.♘e2 I was expecting to see 16...g5!?.
16...♘g6! 17.♘d3 b6



White has problems with his e5-pawn, since c5-c4 is threatened. He already stands worse!

The plain fact is: Anand was completely unprepared for a topical variation which – and this was known beforehand – was part of his opponent's repertoire.

Later he twice more played the Berlin Variation, without demonstrating any serious preparation. One has to ask, why?

Boris Gelfand put forward the suggestion that in this way Anand took a respite and gave his team time to finish working on the repertoire after 1.d4!. But again the question arises: what was the team doing before the match? They could pin their hopes on 1.e4 alone, only if they possessed some weighty stones, capable of breaking the Berlin Wall. But if they had nothing up their sleeve, then...

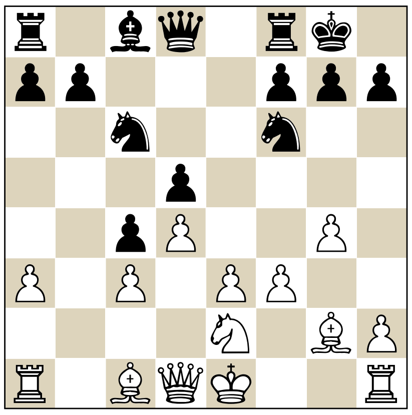
In general, this is a mystery. And an obvious lack of preparation by the Anand camp.

Carlen's team (whose composition we do not know) can be given high marks. In the opening the Norwegian did not fall into any serious traps – and this was the main objective, the solving of which practically guaranteed success in the match.

On the whole, only the ninth game raises questions.

Vishy Anand
Magnus Carlsen
Chennai 2013 (9)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.f3 d5 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.bxc3 c5 7.cxd5 exd5 The usual 7...♘xd5 is more solid. **8.e3 c4** Also a decision that might be questioned, but this was played in 2013 by Agdestein – someone Magnus knows very well. **9.♘e2 ♘c6 10.g4! 0-0 11.♗g2**



Magnus performed the initial moves quite cheerfully, but here he seriously sank into thought.

He sank into thought and became gloomy.
The computer assesses the position as very favourable for Black. It is possible that to some extent this assessment aided the choice of this particular variation. In our time the monitor with its magical lines of analysis has an hypnotic effect even on high-class players. But if we set up the pieces on a wooden board and look at it with human eyes, much becomes clear.
The position looks extremely unpleasant for Black! White has a clear plan of attack in the centre and on the kingside, whereas Black's counterplay is obscure and slight. It was no accident that, in the course of the game, Carlsen (whose human appearance is very discerning) was roughly half an hour behind his opponent on the clock. Which is not typical of him.
Fortunately for the challenger, by that time the champion was no longer capable of landing a strong blow. So that the dubious opening choice went unpunished.
In general, there were some omissions by Magnus's team, but they did not affect the outcome.
I liked Carlsen's spectacular adoption of the Caro-Kann Defence (a very risky opening for an important match) in the second game. In this way did he strengthen Anand's confidence in the move 1.e4? And then came the cold Berlin shower. The trap snapped shut!

To sum up: in team work on the opening, Norway outplayed India.

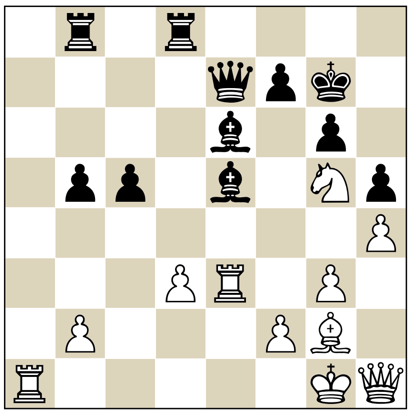
Psychology. Facing the boa

Although Magnus has said in an interview that in another life he could have been a crocodile, for the moment he rather resembles a boa constrictor, which hypnotizes its opponents and then suffocates, suffocates, suffocates...

To all appearances, the World Champion was unable to solve his psychological problems and properly tune up for a battle. He was obviously afraid of his young opponent, afraid of miscalculating. It is only this, in my view, that explains Vishy's timid play at the start of the match. It was then, when he still had a lot of energy, that he should have taken the bull by the horns, or the boa by the throat. This wasn't done. Even though he realized perfectly well that only in an active, dynamic battle did he have chances of winning, Anand was quite unable to make up his mind and go in for it. He put this off until later – and thereby signed his own warrant.

For example, in the first game the champion achieved promising play with Black, but he surprisingly quickly agreed to a draw by repetition. Imagine that at that moment the players had changed places. I think that the challenger would not have terminated the play, and at the least he would have seriously assessed his prospects. Because he has the psychology of a winner, and the colour of the pieces does not influence this.

Later Anand went wrong in an extremely favourable position from the third game.



I was surprised that, with time on his clock, Vishy did not even bother to examine the critical move 29...♗xb2, taking Magnus at his word. And slightly later, on the 33rd and 34th moves, he did not dare focus his attention on the f2-pawn, but chose insipid continuations. With such excessive respect for the opponent he could not expect to win.

Later the following rule operated faultlessly: 'If you don't hit first, you get hit!'

In the end, the champion began playing aggressively only in the two last games of the match, when there was no longer any other option, and – what is most sad – when he no longer had the strength for a large-scale battle.

If one returns to my article before the match, point 4 was not carried out. No one helped Anand in the field of psychology. There was no genuine sensei in his team.

To sum up: in the field of psychology and strength of spirit, Carlsen proved much stronger and sounder than his opponent.

Anand and chess. His place among the Gods

In general, Carlsen's playing superiority (and this was that same player from the super-tournaments, who did not demonstrate anything new) was obvious. A sad conclusion suggests itself: however much Anand tried, whatever he did in Chennai in November, he had little chance of success. From the very start.

His time has passed. Yes, the champion is just 43, and this is not yet a critical age. But he himself has made himself look older in the last few years. He has husbanded his strength so much that he has lost his playing and fighting spirit. Therefore his chances of retaining the title were virtually nil, since it is impossible to demonstrate your best play only once every two years. Specially and to order.

> 'The champion's fingers were constantly moving, and his facial expressions became full of suffering. It was painful to look at him!'

I have many times talked about this online and I am ready to repeat myself: *a chess player's brain is a muscle*. A working, functioning muscle, which needs constant training and in serious tests with maximum intensity. Just like the normal muscles of athletes.

Imagine that Messi and Ronaldo did less training, ceased giving their all in matches, avoided contact on the field and at the first opportunity got rid of the ball. Would they be able later, after months of such veteran football, to again demonstrate their best play? Of course not! The organism is not capable of quickly returning to the maximum. Muscles shrink, weaken and lose their explosive energy. Skills are lost.

Thus after the match in Bonn in 2008 Anand switched to a regime of total economy, endeavouring to win with the least effort. After losing his motivation, he was unable to force himself to fight at full strength. And, of course, his results slumped.

The saddest thing is that Vishy began to be let down by his rapid calculation – that calculation which had been his trump in the preceding decades. But without stable calculation how is it possible to fight against Carlsen in forceful, dynamic play? In previous years Anand never miscalculated so badly as in the fatal ninth game of the match.

The champion was also let down by the fact that his nervous system is no longer accustomed to operating at high intensity. It has become increasingly difficult for him to maintain concentration during a game, and great nervous tension has become simply unbearable for Vishy. Perhaps this was why in the ninth game he rushed to give a mate which wasn't there. He subconsciously aimed to curtail the crisis and terminate his suffering.

And do you remember how the Indian grandmaster behaved at the board at difficult moments in the match? The video operators skilfully caught these moments: the champion's fingers were constantly moving, and his facial expressions became full of suffering. It was painful to look at him!

And the more nervous Anand became, the calmer Carlsen appeared to be – by the law of communicating vessels.

The Gods also interfered. From on high they see everything and take measures. The great champion ceased to give his all to chess, and in return he ceased gaining his previous dose of good fortune in critical situations. The last time that Anand was really fortunate was in the tie-break match with Gelfand, and this was the last gift of the Gods.

After this they turned away from their favourite. And they were right to do this.

Incidentally, the history of Anand's reign as champion gives grounds for discussing another topic:

The system of conducting the World Championship

An enormous achievement of the match in Chennai is that now the World Champion and the strongest player on the planet are the same person. That is how it was in the Kasparov era, and that is how it will be now. Possibly for a long time.

Nevertheless, at the given moment the system of contesting the title remains very questionable – as regards determining the best of the best. A small step forward was made when from short Candidates' matches (Kazan 2011) they switched to a double-round tournament (London 2013). I was very pleased by this change – and life showed how much more interesting and more of a spectacle the play became. But this is a minor point.

The main drawback of the current system is the enormous privileges enjoyed by the World Champion, which are unthinkable for other types of sport. Consider the following fact: in our time the chess champion can retain his title for as long as he wants, *without winning a single game*.

Judge for yourself. Between matches, over a period of long months and years the champion can play as badly as he wants in all the tournaments, lower his rating, put his feet up. Then in a match for the title he endeavours to draw all the games, in order then in the tie-break to win a drawn endgame in a time scramble, or survive the Armageddon. And that's it! He is again the champion. He can put his feet up...

In other types of sport there has long been no such outrage. For example, the world football champions, Spain, do not await their opponents in the final for four years. They play, like all the rest, in the qualifying tournament – simply in order to reach the next World Championship. No privileges! A similar picture can also be seen in other types of sport.

Of course, analogies cannot be a 100% argument. Chess has its special features. But, you have to agree, there should be a limit to these.

> 'Yes, the right of the champion to a final match is our historic tradition, but you can't live in the past!'

Yes, the right of the champion to a final match is our historic tradition, but you can't live in the past! The world has changed greatly over the past hundred years, and democratic and competitive principles have become far more important than dynastic traditions. In sport, at least. And chess should hardly remain an exception.

Incidentally, roughly a year ago Carlsen also expressed the opinion that the champion's privileges are excessive. It will be interesting to know how he regards this question, being now the champion. We will see.

What changes are possible in the system of contesting the title? There are probably numerous variations.

If the final match is retained, it must be done so that the champion begins playing at an early stage of the cycle, demonstrating above all an ability to win, and not simply a skill in making draws and awaiting his chance.

Another approach is to expand the number in the final. That is, in the qualifying cycle determine not one, but several (three, five or seven) candidates, who together with the champion will contest a match-tournament for the World Championship. For example, instead of the match in Chennai it seems to me that a four-round match-tournament of four contestants would have been far more intriguing: Anand, Carlsen, Kramnik and Aronian. Let's return to the start of November and imagine such an event...

A high intensity in a match-tournament is guaranteed, since, in contrast to a match, if a player is in a drawing quagmire he will not win the title. Therefore it is unlikely that in such a tournament we would see short and tedious draws (remember the first two games of the match in Chennai) – i.e. the spectators and press would obtain what they want. A spectacle and food for thought. And in such an evenly-matched tournament it is unlikely that by the middle of the event the winner will be known. How interesting it would be to be a commentator at such a final!

But these are merely my dreams. I realize perfectly well that our world is immensely conservative and that many years will pass before any serious changes occur.

But for the moment I will once again congratulate Carlsen on winning the title. I remember that after the tournament in Tromsø in 2006 I went up to young Magnus and expressed the wish that he would become World Champion. Since in this case it would be especially pleasant to remember that tournament and our game. The lad was slightly embarrassed, and said that he would try.

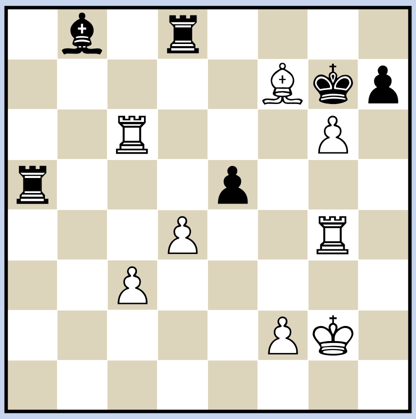
And he has kept his word. ■

Yochanan Afek

Beware: Brilliancy!

Oversights are part of the practice of each and every one of us. All six positions below were played by masters and grandmasters in the recent European club championship in Rhodes. Can you do better?

★★☆☆☆



1. White to play

Two pawns up White continued **36.d5** and the rook ending following **36...♖a7 37.gxh7+ ♔xf7 38.♖cg6 ♖h8 39.♖g8 ♖xh7 40.♖xb8** still lasted 16 more moves. A better suggestion, anyone?

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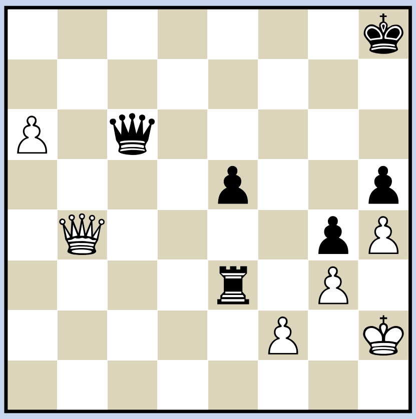

2. White to play

Black has just sacrificed the exchange, hoping to stop the passer. She almost managed: **61.♕f8+** 61.fxe3? ♕c2+. **61...♔h7 62.♕f5+ ♔g8 63.♕g5+ ♔f7??** 63...♔f8! 64.♕xe3 ♕xa6 65.♕xe5 ♕g6 was correct. **64.♕xh5+ ♔f8 65.♕f5+ ♔e8 66.fxe3 1-0** Is there a superior alternative in the initial position?

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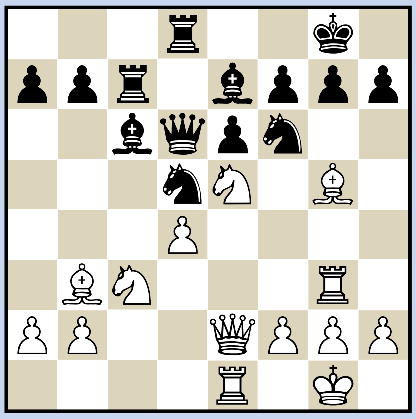

3. White to play

In an early stage of the game White settled for a repetition with **19.♗h6 ♗f8 20.♗g5 ♗e7 21.♗h6 ♗f8 22.♗g5 ♗e7 23.♗h6 ♗f8**, probably to the delight of the other player, who might have noticed what his opponent was blind to. How about you?

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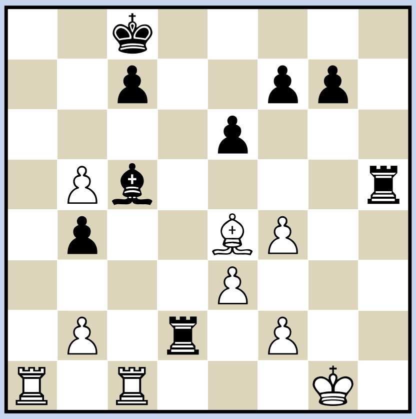

4. White to play

Realizing that **32.♗c6 ♔d8 33.♖a8+ ♔e7 34.♖e8+** leads nowhere, White decided to repeat moves with **32.♗f3 ♖f5 33.♗e4 ♖h5 34.♗f3 ♖f5**, and a draw was indeed agreed on. What did he miss?

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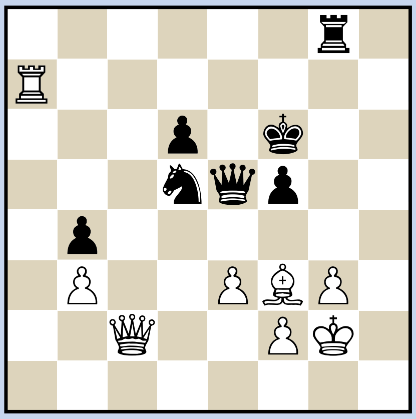

5. White to play

Black has just created the serious threat 51...♘xe3+, which is not easy to meet, as was demonstrated in the game: **51.♕d3 ♘xe3+!** and Black managed to draw. The post-mortem revealed that for White attack was the best defence. Do you see how?

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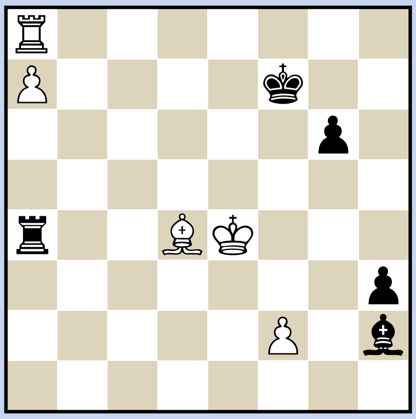


6. Black to play

Both sides have a dangerous passed pawn, yet the white king is way closer to the danger zone. Black tried the natural **42...♗g1** and had to call it a day merely two moves later: **43.♖h8 h2 44.♔f3 1-0** Can you propose a more efficient rescuing path?

The number of stars roughly indicates their estimated level of difficulty: 1 is easiest and 5 most difficult. **Solutions on page 113**

Svidler and Gunina

Russian Champions

Despite the fact that 2013 beat all records for the number of big events – it's enough to mention the Candidates' tournament, the World Cup and the two World Championship matches – the Russian Championship Super Final was a contender for the title of almost the most interesting event of the year. Says **Mark Glukhovsky**, editor-in-chief of '64', the number one Russian chess publication, who fills you in with the details.

BORIS DOLMATOVSKY

ETERI KUBLASHVILI

The special ones of the 2013 Russian Championships. Valentina Gunina claimed the title for the second time. The amazing Peter Svidler won his seventh(!) title.

I've already had the chance to tell New In Chess readers about the purpose and spirit of the Russian Super Finals in 2010 and 2011. In 2010 Ian Nepomniachtchi's star was shining, as he managed to unite the titles of national champion and European champion. The year 2011 was exceptionally successful for Peter Svidler, who won both the World Cup and (for the sixth time!) the national championship. The Russian Championship of last year, 2012, was the least exciting one – it was enough for Dmitry Andreikin to score +1 and beat his opponents in rapid chess tiebreaks to win it. Many people (the author of these lines among them) considered Andreikin's reign as champion sort of a random twist of fate – until in August 2013 the then-Russian champion used exactly the same strategy to become a finalist in the World Cup in Tromsø and participant in the next Candidates' tournament that will be held next March.

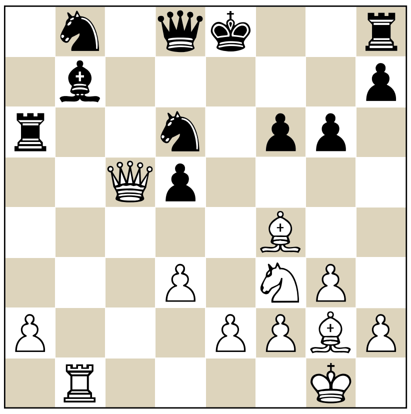
This time the winners of the last three Russian Championships and the holder of the World Cup Vladimir Kramnik were the main characters competing for the title in Nizhny Novgorod.

The only potential favourite who hardly took part in the fight for the medals was Sergey Karjakin, who fell into a noticeable crisis from June of this year. Then again, his playing level is such that even without being on top form he almost got into the battle for the medals.

Nizhny Novgorod itself is one of Russia's biggest cities, located 400 kilometres from Moscow at the confluence of the Volga and the Oka. In the Soviet era it was called Gorky (Bitter), named after the writer Maxim Gorky, who was born here and who was a friend of Lenin and one of the most influential people in the early USSR. At the end of the Soviet Union's existence the city was famous as the place of exile of the great physicist and most famous dissident in the USSR, Andrei Sakharov (the fact that sakhar means sugar is a little linguistic irony of history). Chess was practically the favourite form of entertainment for the generations of the technical intelligentsia of Nizhny Novgorod in that period. Many of the spectators hadn't been to a strong chess tournament in over twenty years, but I should point out that it wasn't just old people who came to the hall – there were also children, and the mums watched their wunderkinder with pride.

The tournament was held at the 'Estate of the Rukavishnikovs' museum, which is on a high and unusually scenic bank of the Volga. The Russian 'Chess in Museums' programme that was launched in May last year, beginning with the Tretyakov Gallery (the 2012 World Championship match between Anand and Gelfand), the Louvre and the Russian

Museum (the 2013 Alekhine Memorial tournament) thus had a slightly unexpected provincial continuation. But the most pleasant picture on show could be observed not behind museum glass, but through the window: the 'golden autumn' eulogized by Russian poets was fantastic, as on Levitan's canvases, and could have made the strongest aesthetic impression of the tournament on me – were it not for the surprisingly interesting events that started literally from the first round. All five of the men's games produced results! In total in the men's Super Final 26 out of 45 games ended in a win for one of the players. From this first round let me point out the aggression of Vladimir Kramnik, who clearly showed that he planned to fight for the last title in chess he hadn't conquered. He played the opening sharply against the newbie of the Super Final and was already on the brink of defeat by the 20th move.



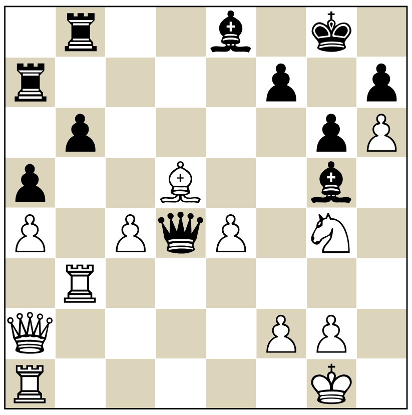
Kramnik-Shomoev
position after 19.♖b1

Black has an only, but easily-found move here – 19...♗a8. Kramnik was planning to reply 20.♕b4!?, and a very complicated position arises: Black's pieces are almost stalemated, but he's a rook up!

But at this point Shomoev didn't withstand the tension and made a horrible blunder – after **19...♘d7? 20.♕e3+** White took the piece and won.

Peter Svidler as White outplayed Ian Nepomniachtchi in a tense battle. The two star Grünfeldists played a non-standard 'anti-Grünfeld' and matched each other for a long time, but Svidler was able to exploit his opponent's inaccuracies in the end. Few would have thought that it would be these grandmasters who would determine the winner on a tiebreak in the end! Another result that deserved attention was Dmitry Andreikin's win against Sergey Karjakin. Remember, it was Andreikin who knocked Karjakin out of the World Cup in Norway.

> 'Dmitry Andreikin is probably one of the most enigmatic players of our time, and only the Candidates' tournament will allow us to give at least some kind of characterization of this original grandmaster.'

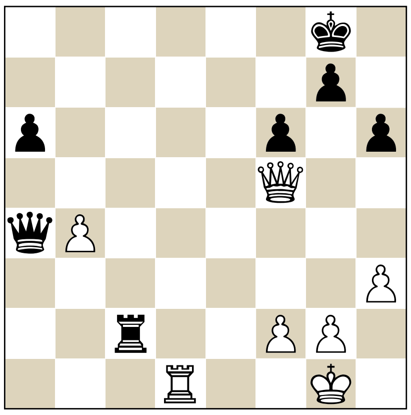


Andreikin-Karjakin
position after 34...♕d4

During the game White missed a chance to decide the outcome of the battle with a forced attack, but his position was still fantastic. After **35.c5! ♔f8 36.c6 f5 37.♖f3 ♗f7 38.♘e3 fxe4 39.♖d1 ♕c5 40.♗xe4 ♗xh6 41.♖d7 ♖xd7 42.cxd7 ♕c1+ 43.♔h2** the time-trouble ended, and Black resigned.

By the second round the roles were reversed – Nepomniachtchi didn't abandon himself to despair, but produced a kind of masterpiece of psychological preparation. Andreikin often employs the risky variation of the Caro-Kann, 3.e5 c5, with great success. But in his game with Ian he ran into an unexpected 'refutation' – a2-a3! on the fifth move, and by the 20th Black had simply run out of sensible options. Andreikin soon sacrificed a piece in desperation, but Ian only had to demonstrate the most elementary accuracy.

In the third round Dmitry Andreikin continued his pattern of playing for a result. It's fair to say that he's probably one of the most enigmatic players of our time, and only the Candidates' tournament will allow us to give at least some kind of characterization of this original grandmaster and understand his place in the world rankings. While he achieved success in the World Cup above all thanks to draws in the classical time limits and subsequent wins in the rapid games, at the Super Final he demonstrated surprisingly fresh and wholehearted play. The ex-Russian champion made his first draw only in the seventh round – and in the third he outplayed Kramnik, taking his score for personal encounters with the ex-World Champion to +2 (three wins, one loss). In the Berlin Variation, Vladimir Kramnik, who only recently advised his opponent from a distance to 'tighten up' his openings, came up against something unexpected early on and soon got a difficult endgame a pawn down. On the 36th move Andreikin was able to decide the game in his favour with a beautiful example on the theme of cutting off a piece.



Andreikin-Kramnik
position after 35...♕xa4

At this moment Sergey Shipov and I were looking for a forced win live on ChessTV, but, to my surprise, we couldn't find one at all. Our viewers, among whom were some very highly rated amateurs, were also actively participating in the debates. It seemed unbelievable that there was no move in this position that would simply put an end to things. Judging by the scene in the hall, Dmitry himself was experiencing the same emotions – usually as imperturbable as a sphinx, he was vigorously shaking his head and staring at the board with all the intensity he could muster. At the same time the very appealing 36.b5! arrived via Skype from Genna Sosonko – this move cuts the black queen off from the important diagonal and White calmly mates after 36...axb5 37.♖d8+ ♔f7 38.♕h5+ ♔e6 39.♕d5+ ♔e7 40.♕d7+. Andreikin didn't find this elegant solution, but Black's position still remained extremely difficult, and on the 80th move Vladimir Kramnik was forced to admit defeat.

Н. Витюгов
2729

BORIS DOLMATOVSKY

Is it jinxed? Vladimir Kramnik has won everything there is to be won, but the Russian Championship keeps eluding him.

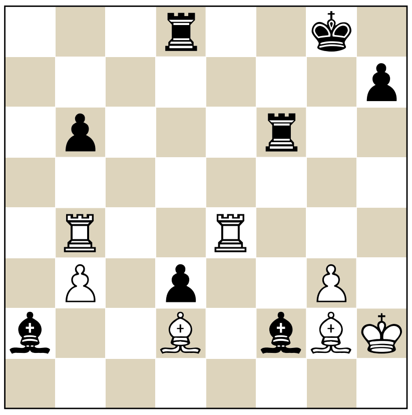
Meanwhile, Peter Svidler beat Anton Shomoev and caught up with his second and fellow St. Petersburger Nikita Vitiugov – the latter had started the tournament with two wins. It seemed that the main contenders for the championship had been determined, but the first three rounds turned out to be just a tantalizing taste of the culmination that was to come.

Vladimir Kramnik won his next three rounds in a row against Alexey Goganov (who only got his grandmaster title during this tournament!), Alexander Motylev and Ernesto Inarkiev. In recent years Kramnik has gained many new fans, as he has completely reworked his style. He is now prepared to do a great deal in pursuit of first place, and he's not at all interested in any other result. As White against Goganov and Inarkiev Vladimir produced two great examples of endgame technique, and as Black he outcalculated Motylev in a sharp middlegame. In a less tense competition this breakout would have put Kramnik among the leaders, but his main opponents weren't wasting their time – Peter Svidler and Ian Nepomniachtchi scored 2½ out of 3 in the middle of the tournament. Svidler outplayed Andreikin impressively, then literally forced through the defences of the unsuccessful Motylev. Russian championships are tournaments in which Peter regularly manages to show his best play. We'll leave the explanation of this phenomenon to future biographers of the now seven-times champion of Russia. For me, a journalist who scans reality, observing Peter's play provoked a feeling that's well known as déjà vu – 'I've seen this somewhere before'. It wasn't difficult to recall where exactly: 2011, an early victory in the Super Final two years ago. Then Svidler also outplayed Nepomniachtchi as White, by the way, but the distance was shorter as there were only eight participants.

Over a longer distance Nepomniachtchi proved himself a worthy stayer. In the middle of the tournament Ian routed Inarkiev, and also his direct opponent in the battle for the medals, Vitiugov. In both games Ian managed to tie up his opponents as early as the opening. If we're talking about luck, then for Nepomniachtchi it came from the fact that his opponents were in a very aggressive mood, but in sharp, unbalanced positions Ian displayed his best qualities – he capably maintained the initiative, changed his plans, and calculated variations precisely and deeply. And, extremely importantly, he did this very quickly – both of his opponents, strong and experienced grandmasters, were victims of blunders in time trouble in the end.

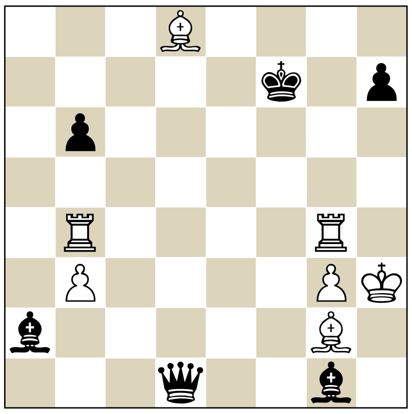
As a result, three rounds before the end Svidler went into clear first place with the imposing score of 5 out of 6 – Peter won all his White games. And while at the beginning of the tournament the self-critical grandmaster could still jokingly complain about his luck, after his win over Andreikin he was forced to admit that he played 'OK'. I think everyone learned what Svidler's interpretation of 'OK' is: basically it means that a person with the fastest possible processor in his head is sitting opposite you. Add to that his amazing memory, his wonderful chess erudition and his ability to maintain the tension for dozens of moves. Bear in mind the fact that this chess monster finally believes in himself, in his strength, in his purpose. And he lost 20 kilos of weight for the previous Candidates' tournament. So if you like looking at the websites of bookmakers and you need a 'long shot' for the forthcoming Candidates' tournament, i.e. a horse, betting on which could give you a good profit – I advise you to consider the seven-times champion of Russia.

At the end of the tournament Svidler slowed down somewhat – he had to play two games as Black, and for understandable reasons his opponents didn't want to step over the limit of acceptable risk. As for his game as White with Vitiugov – Peter's second was sitting opposite him, and no matter how formidable a player the current Svidler is, above all he remains a gentleman. Thanks to that Kramnik and Nepomniachtchi got a chance to catch up with Svidler in the final stage. Kramnik tried particularly hard, not wanting to decide the fate of the tournament in the last round. However, his ex-champion opponents, Vitiugov and Karjakin, weren't burning with desire to make way for the most decorated Russian player. Here, for example, is the ending of an extremely tense game.



Vitiugov-Kramnik
position after 34...♖f6

Despite sharp mutual time trouble, the opponents play in the strongest way. **35.♗g5! d2 36.♗xf6 d1♕ 37.♖g4+ ♔f7 38.♗xd8 ♗g1+ 39.♔h3**



39...♕xd8 Kramnik left himself just three seconds for this long move all the way across the board. He saw that deviating from the draw was impossible, but he tried to find resources to confuse his opponent right to the end. But Vitiugov calculated everything precisely. **40.♖bf4+ ♔e7 41.♖e4+ ♔f6 42.♖ef4+ ♔e7 43.♖e4+ ♔d6 44.♖d4+ ♗xd4 45.♖xd4+ ♔e7 46.♖xd8 ♔xd8 47.♗e4 ♗xb3 48.♗xh7 b5 49.♔g4 ♔e7** Draw.

In Round 8 Nepomniachtchi outplayed Anton Shomoev as Black, and now the outcome took on a cinematic character – before the last round Svidler was half a point ahead of Kramnik and Nepomniachtchi, who were about to meet. Svidler was playing Black against Karjakin, and the most likely result was a draw, as Karjakin, in average form, wasn't aiming to achieve anything. Sergey was able to ignite a battle in one of the long forced lines of the Grünfeld, but Peter, despite his tiredness, figured out the complicated position, got the necessary result and became the most interested spectator of the epic Nepomniachtchi-Kramnik duel. In the event of a draw he would become Russian champion for the seventh time, while a decisive game would give the winner the right to a tiebreak – two rapid games.

At first it seemed that a draw was the most likely result. Straight from the opening the game switched to a complex many-piece endgame. Nepomniachtchi was ready for it, while Kramnik had to work it out at the board. Vladimir used up quite a lot of time, but played more strongly;

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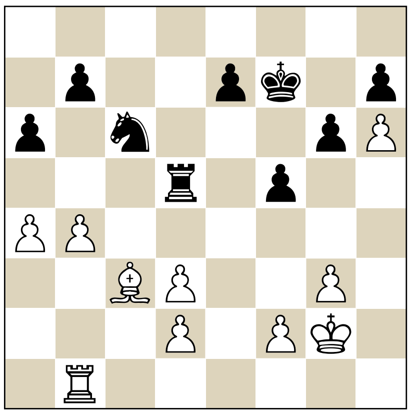
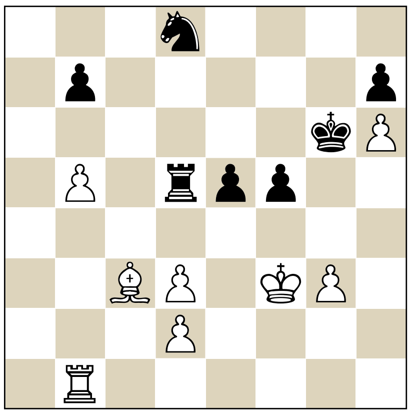
after a while Black not only equalized, but even made a serious claim to an advantage. 'My position wasn't dangerous,' Ian said, 'it's just that in 10 moves Black improved his piece set-up, but White stayed the same.' At a certain point it seemed that a tiebreak between Svidler and Kramnik was inevitable; with that thought Peter, having finished his game, went out of the playing hall to his hotel. And Nepomniachtchi switched to a tough defence.

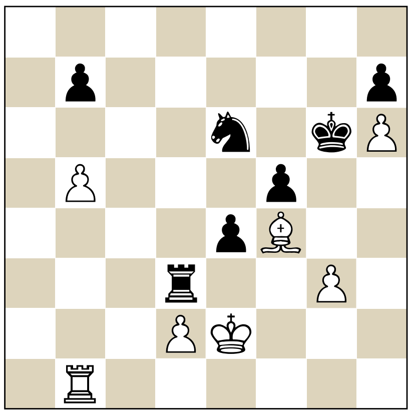


Nepomniachtchi-Kramnik
position after 35.♖b1

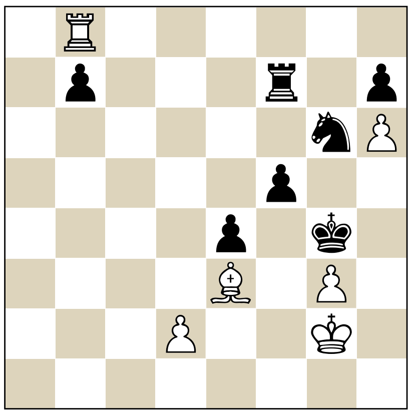
White's position looks alarming: the black king is planning to go to g6, heading for the doomed h6-pawn... It's difficult to imagine that it's this pawn that will bring a win in the end... to White.
35...g5 36.♖e1 e6 37.♖e3 ♘e7 38.♗e5 ♘c6 39.♗c3 e5 40.♖e1 g4 41.♖b1 ♔g6 42.b5 axb5 43.axb5 ♘d8 44.f3 gxf3+ 45.♔xf3



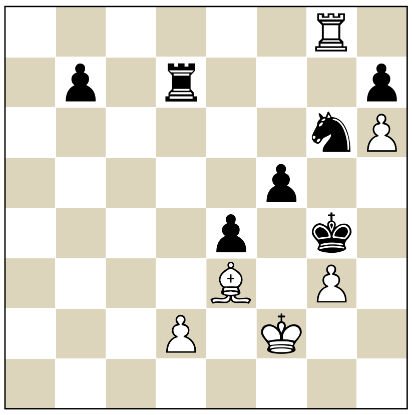
45...♖xd3+
Black wants to take the pawn without any inconvenience, but that doesn't work for now: 45...♔xh6 46.g4.
46.♔e2 e4 47.♗e5 ♘e6 48.♗f4



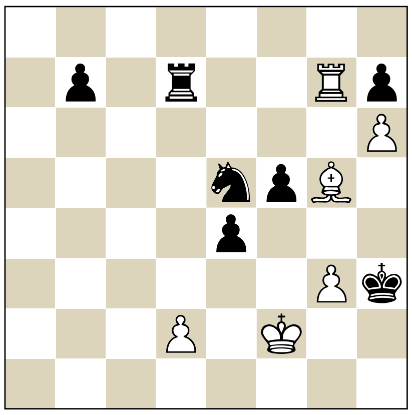
48...♖f3
The main continuation is 48...♘xf4+ 49.gxf4 ♔xh6 50.♖h1+ ♔g6 51.♖g1+ ♔f6 52.♖h1 ♖d7 53.♖h5. Kramnik thought that White could hold the ending, but later it was no longer possible to take the h-pawn.
49.b6
According to Ian, after transferring his bishop to f4 and putting his pawn on b6, White shouldn't lose – there's a position of dynamic equality on the board. But Kramnik kept looking for paths to victory and fell into time-trouble, and a trap too!
49...♘d4+ 50.♔e1 ♘c2+ 51.♔e2 ♘d4+ 52.♔e1 ♖b3 53.♖c1 ♖xb6 54.♖c8 ♘e6 55.♗e3 ♖d6 56.♖g8+ ♔f6 57.♖b8 ♖d7 58.♔f2 ♔e5 59.♖a8 ♔f6 60.♖b8 ♖f7 61.♖a8 ♔g6 62.♖g8+ ♔h5 63.♖e8 ♘f8 64.♔g2 ♔g4 65.♖b8 ♘g6



After putting his knight on g6 Black doesn't fear an invasion by the enemy rook on g7 – in reply he just exchanges and plays ♘e7.
66.♖g8 ♖d7 67.♔f2
Inviting its counterpart to go forward...



67...♔h3? 68.♗g5!
Now ♖g7 is a serious threat, as White has taken the e7-square away from the knight. Here Black could have held the position with 68...b5! 69.♖g7 ♘f8!, but Kramnik choked in time-trouble...
68...♘e5? 69.♖g7



69...b5? After 69...♖d3! 70.♔e2 ♘g4 71.♖xh7 ♖xg3 72.♗f4 ♖g2+ 73.♔d1 ♖f2 74.♖g7 ♘xh6 75.♗xh6 f4 76.♖e7 e3 Black exchanges off his opponent's last pawn, and he has to defend a notorious 'rook and bishop versus rook' ending. **70.♔e2!** The king holds off the passed pawn. **70...b4 71.♗f4 ♘f7** The last chance was 71...♖d5 72.♖xh7 ♘g6 73.♗e3 b3. **72.♖xh7 b3 73.♔d1 e3 74.♗xe3 ♖c7 75.♗d4 ♔g2 76.♗c3 ♔f2 77.♔c1 ♖a7**
And, without waiting for the check from d4, Black admitted defeat.

It's humiliating to collapse 100 metres from the finishing line – that was Vladimir's comment on the outcome. Even before the start of the tournament the ex-World Champion was feeling tired after his win in the World Cup, but he soon got back on form. Unfortunately, in the decisive game,

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in a 'technically winning' position, in his words, Kramnik didn't have the strength to follow through correctly. We should also give Nepomniachtchi his due for making his opponent's task as hard as possible, and then being able to exploit his chance.

It seemed that fortune would favour Ian, who has exceptionally good results at rapid chess. (It's enough to recall his appearance at the last World Rapid Championship – or just to look at the ratings list.) In a strange way, the tiebreak battle didn't happen. Svidler, who had managed to relax after his game, looked much more accurate and won convincingly.

'I probably didn't deserve it!' Ian blurted out right after the end of the two 15-minute games, and there was more truth in that comment than in many of his interviews. In the depths of his soul Nepomniachtchi believed that he should have outplayed Kramnik, not received a gift from him. We should note that it isn't easy to get this kind of 'gift' either – 90 percent of players would simply have lost that endgame to Kramnik. But Nepomniachtchi's ambitions, to his credit, were directed not only towards the result, but also towards the quality of play required to achieve that result.

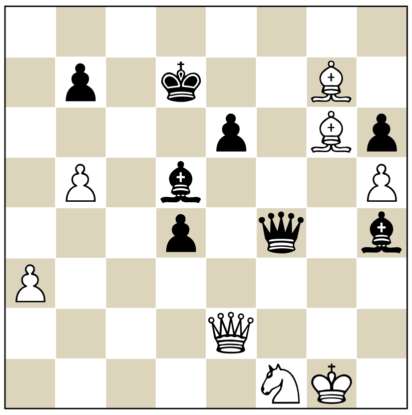
'Let's not forget who won five games in this tournament!' Svidler remarked when I discussed the results of the championship with him. Recently Svidler has given so many interviews that I won't misuse his direct quotes. As usual he remains a find for any journalist – he reacts quickly, puts words into sentences beautifully, and sprinkles them with soundbites and jokes. But you can get sick of even the best dish if you eat it three times. Let's wait for some new successes by the seven-times national champion, which – here I have no doubt – will come very soon.

This is even more likely because for the first time in many years Peter has gathered a team around him. The wonderful Petersburg grandmaster Nikita Vitiugov, who took third place in the tournament, is on that team. Nikita isn't just a strong player. He's a player with ideas, who is ready to defend and insist on them. He's prepared for a sharp tactical battle and for prolonged positional resistance. In the last round he outplayed Dmitry Andreikin in an apparently equal position and took third place ahead of Vladimir Kramnik thanks to his better coefficient.

The format of this article doesn't allow me to talk about the women's championship of the country in such detail, although there was just as much excitement in it as in the men's. And when at the closing ceremony one of the fans passionately shouted out, 'Thank you for your play, girls!', he had full justification for that. Valentina Gunina, Alexandra Kosteniuk and Natalia Pogonina – these three can enhance any women's tournament. Fortunately both the Russian champion, Gunina, and vice-champion, Kosteniuk, found time to comment on their best games.

'Valentina senses tactics so well and is so confident in herself that she never deviates onto side paths if there's a direct one.'

I'll only tell you about the strongest impressions that stayed with me from the game Pogonina-Gunina. This game was played in the seventh round, and although Valentina had led throughout the tournament (at this point she was on 5 out of 6), she hadn't used up all her fighting spirit. On the contrary, Gunina sacrificed a piece for two pawns and a dangerous initiative, and made it through a losing position and severe time trouble. Her opponent, a strong grandmaster and the reigning Russian champion, conducted the game very well. But after a series of mutual blunders and a truly tough battle the following position arose.



Pogonina-Gunina
position after 48.♔g1

48...d3! Valentina didn't spend much time on this natural move: she calculates variations wonderfully. After the obligatory **49.♗xd3** the tournament's commentators, grandmasters Sergei Shipov and Alexander Baburin, exhaled – it was clear that Black would now give check, take the bishop and cash in on her material advantage. Three minutes passed – and Valentina replied **49...♗e7!** Black simply mates, not distracted by material gains. Behind her was a very difficult game that could have taken her tournament downhill, but Valentina senses tactics so well and is so confident in herself that she never deviates onto side paths if there's a direct one. **50.♕e3 ♕g4+ 51.♕g3 ♗c5+ 52.♗d4 ♗xd4+ 53.♔h2 ♗e5** Mate is unavoidable, White resigned.

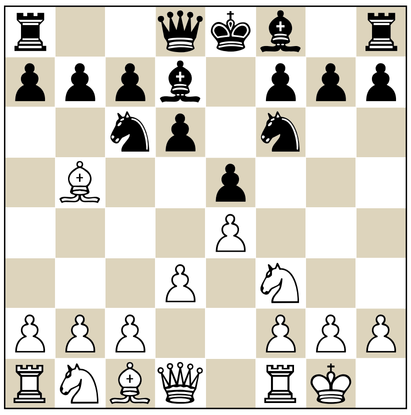
And to the logical question of a commentator, 'Valya, how can you play chess like THAT?', she replied, 'I'd happily play differently, if I could.'

Valya, don't do anything differently! I hope that many chess fans will agree with my words. Those who value freshness, energy and beauty in play. All of us who would like to play like the now two-times champion of Russia plays. Would like to, but can't.

NOTES BY
Peter Svidler

RL 7.1 – C66
Peter Svidler
Dmitry Andreikin
Nizhny Novgorod 2013 (4)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.d3 d6 5.0-0 ♗d7

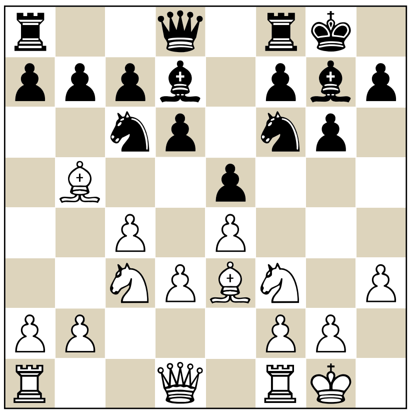


6.c4 Trying to avoid the more popular set-ups. The game Motylev-Inarkiev, played three days previously, continued 6.c3 g6 7.♖e1, and ended in a win for Black.

6...g6 7.♘c3 ♗g7 8.♗e3
8.h3 would allow 8...♘d4, with simplifications, something I was quite keen to avoid.

8...0-0 8...♘g4 9.♗g5 is clearly unattractive for Black.

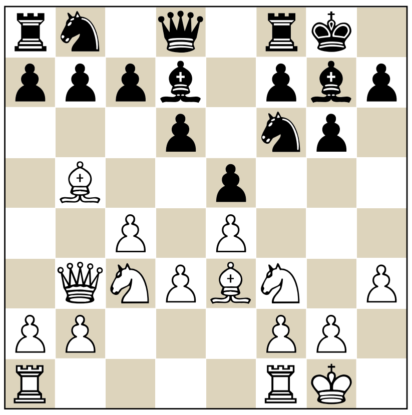
9.h3



I quite liked my position here – it seemed much easier for White to improve. Black could try the usual counterplay ...♘h5, ...f5, etc., but the knight on c3 is a huge improvement over its normal development to d2, and White is much better prepared to play in the centre. Apart from the standard plans – ♖e1, ♖c1, d4 etc. – I thought it might be interesting in some positions to try c4-c5, opening up the play and preparing the potentially very nice c4-square for the bishop.

9...♘b8!? Sensibly trying to regroup and take some pieces off the board.

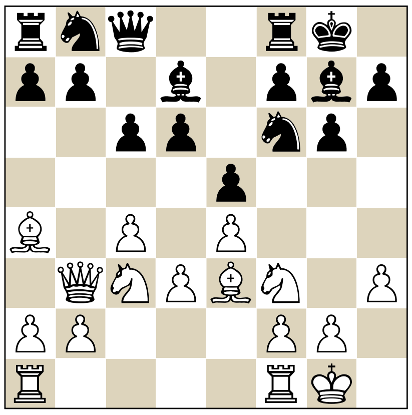
10.♕b3!?



A very odd-looking move, but I became quite fascinated by it from the moment it occurred to me, and I just could not stop myself. In this very artificial fashion, White more or less ensures that the bishops stay on the board.

10...c6 The most obvious reply. 10...♗xb5 11.cxb5 is a very welcome change of structure for White, while after both 10...♗e6 11.♘g5 ♗c8 12.c5! h6 13.♘f3 and 10...♗c8 11.c5! a6 12.♗c4 ♘c6 13.♖ac1 ♘a5 14.♕a3 ♘xc4 15.dxc4 White will be better.

11.♗a4 ♕c8
This move looks a bit strange, but after the normal 11...♗c8 12.♕c2 ♘bd7 13.b4 White has a very pleasant edge.

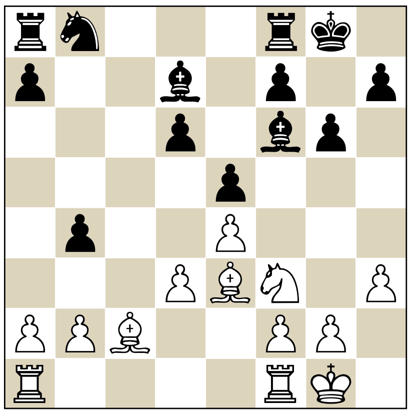


12.♕d1
I became worried that Dmitry might take on h3 if allowed, and possibly over-reacted, but the queen is OK on d1 – its mission is complete anyway.
I could have gone 12.♕c2, but after 12...b5!? (12...♗xh3 does not actually work: 13.gxh3 ♕xh3 14.♕e2! – 14.

In the wake of the drama and excitement that preceded it, the play-off looked like a formality. As if he didn't know of Ian Nepomniachtchi's rapid reputation, Peter Svidler won seemingly effortlessly.

ETERI KUBLASHVILI

♘g5 ♕g4+ 15.♔h2 ♗h6! is fine for Black – 14...♘g4 15.♗d1! f5 16.♖e1 ♘d7 17.♕f1) 13.cxb5 cxb5 14.♗b3 b4 15.♘d5 ♕xc2 16.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 17.♗xc2 White's edge did not seem enough to me:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

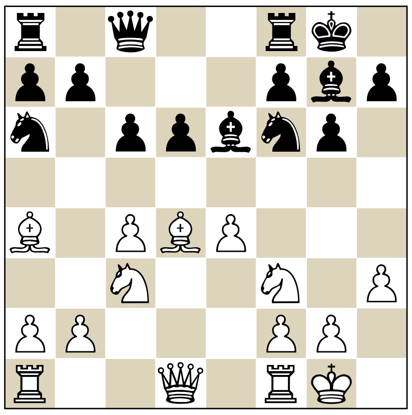
17...♘c6!? 18.♖fc1 ♘d4 19.♗xd4 exd4 20.♗b3 ♖fc8, and White is still a bit better, but Black has decent chances of survival.

12...♘a6 13.d4?! Somewhat hasty, although not bad as such.

Initially I had planned to play 13.a3 ♘c5 (13...♖e8 14.♗c2) 14.♗c2 here, and after 14...♖e8 15.♖e1 ♕c7 16.d4 exd4 17.♗xd4 ♘e6 18.♗e3 White has a stable plus, mainly due the horrible light-squared bishop on d7, which has no future at all.

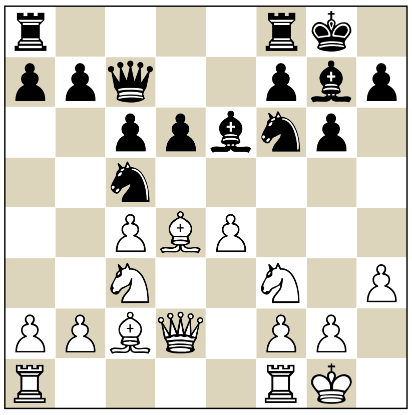
13...exd4 14.♗xd4 ♗e6

I had missed this simple move. Now White is forced to misplace some of his pieces.



15.♕e2

I did not give too much thought to 15.♗b3, but perhaps I should have: 15...♕c7 (15...♘c5 is risky: 16.e5! ♘xb3 17.exf6 ♘xd4 18.♕xd4 ♗h8 19.♕h4, and White has a serious initiative) 16.♕d2 ♘c5 17.♗c2!:

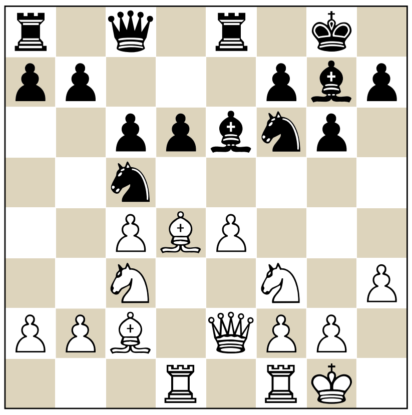


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 17...♖ad8 18.b3 ♗c8 19.♖ad1, with a white edge.

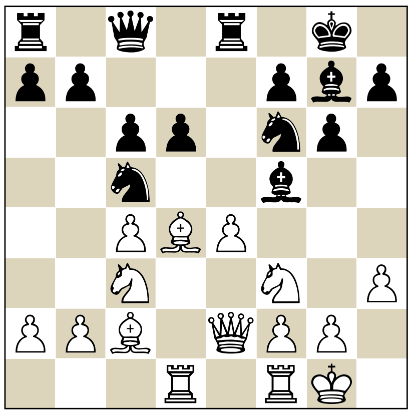
B) 17...♗xc4 18.e5! dxe5 19.♗xc5 ♖fd8 20.♕g5 ♗xf1 21.♖xf1, and White clearly has the better chances

15...♖e8 16.♖ad1 ♘c5 17.♗c2



17...♘cd7?!

Too abstract. During the game I was very worried about 17...♗f5, and with good reason:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

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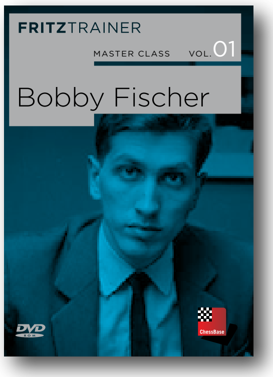

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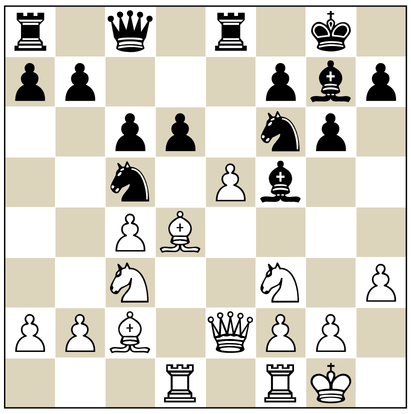
A) 18.♘d2 ♘cxe4! is an immediate draw: 19.♘dxe4 ♘xe4 20.♘xe4 ♗xe4 21.♗xe4 d5 22.♗xg7 ♖xe4;

B) 18.e5! is the only way to fight for an advantage:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

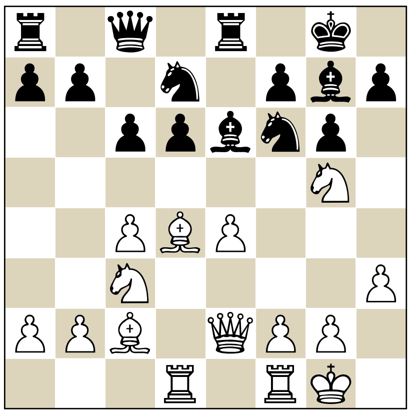
B1) 18...♘fd7? 19.♗xf5 gxf5 20.♘h4! dxe5 21.♗e3 is bad: 21...f4 22.♘f5! fxe3 23.♕g4 ♘e6 24.fxe3, and White is almost winning;

B2) 18...♘e6 19.♗xf5 gxf5 gives White a choice: 20.♕c2!? ♘xd4 21.♘xd4 ♖xe5 22.f4 ♖c5 23.♕d3, and the black rook on c5 is in trouble; or 20.exf6 ♘xd4 21.♕d3 ♘xf3+ 22.♕xf3 ♗xf6 23.♖xd6 ♗e5, and this clearly favours White;

B3) 18...♘cd7! 19.♗xf5 gxf5, and now White needs to find 20.e6! fxe6 (20...♖xe6 21.♕c2) 21.♗xf6 ♗xf6 22.♖xd6 ♘f8 23.♖fd1, with some pressure, but if Black manages to swap along the d-file he should survive.

18.♘g5

Now White's play is very easy.



18...♕c7 Now Black has to constantly worry about f4-f5.

18...h6, at least forcing White to trade off the pointless bishop on e6, worried me more, but after 19.♘xe6 ♖xe6 20.f4 ♕c7 21.♕f2 ♖ae8 22.g4 White is pressing.

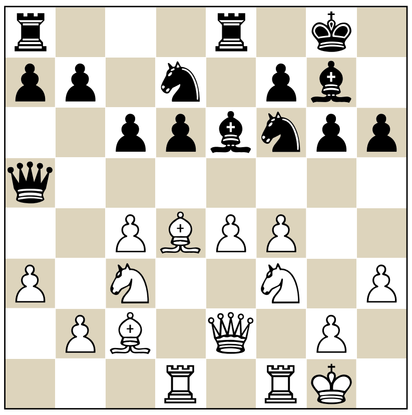
19.f4 ♕a5 20.a3

A useful move, stopping ...♕b4 forever. In this position, with time-trouble approaching fast, Dmitry went for a tempting forcing continuation which led to a very bad position, but Black's situation was quite difficult anyway, whatever he did.

20...h6

20...♖ad8 21.♗e3! h6 (21...♕a6 22.♘xe6 ♖xe6 23.♕f2! is just bad – White has a lot of direct threats, with f5 and c5 the biggest two) 22.♘xe6 ♖xe6 23.f5 gxf5 24.exf5 ♖ee8 25.♕d2 ♔h7 26.♖f4, and White launches a direct attack.

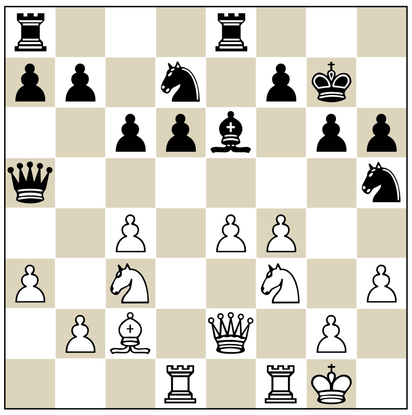
21.♘f3



21...♘h5?

Better was 21...♖ad8, but after the consolidating 22.♖f2 ♘b6 23.♘d2 Black still has no useful plans, whereas White has a variety of options to reinforce his position.

22.♗xg7 ♔xg7 A lot seems to be hanging in White's camp...



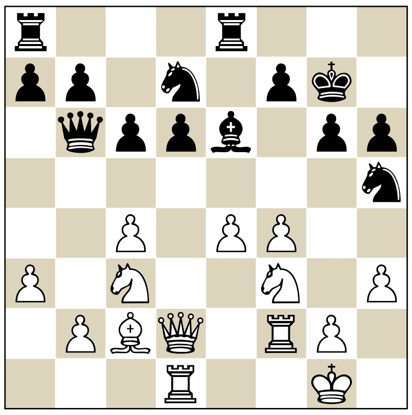
23.♕d2!

My opponent probably underestimated this move. White side-steps the forks, and defends the very important f4-pawn. The pawn on c4 is seemingly left unprotected, but there is no good way to collect it, whereas Black's problems are much more pronounced – d6 is terminally weak, and with the dark-squared bishops gone, White is ready to launch an attack on the kingside.

23...♕b6+

Taking the d4-square under control and preparing to at least take on c4.

24.♖f2! It's important that this rook is not hanging in any lines.



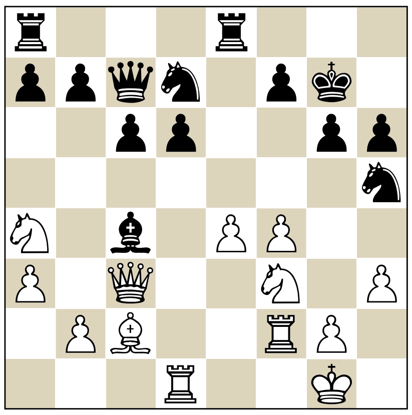
24...♗xc4

24...♕xb2 25.f5! loses a piece.

25.♘a4 Totally disrupting Black's position. It was possible to play 25.♕xd6, but this is much stronger.

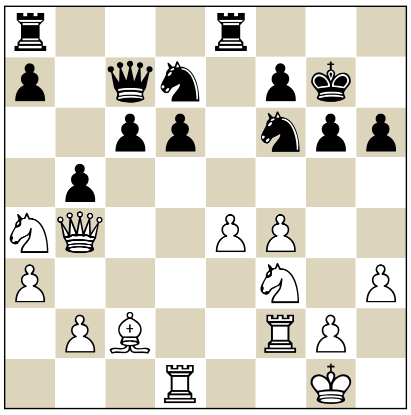
25...♕c7 Black's only chance. After 25...♕a6 26.♕c3+ ♘df6 27.♖xd6 Black can resign.

26.♕c3+

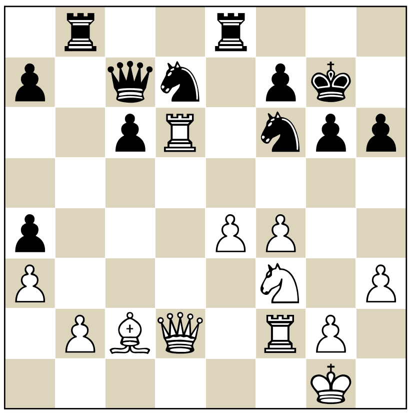


26...♘hf6 26...♔g8 would have been more tenacious, but after 27.♕xc4 b5 28.♕b4 bxa4 White has a pleasant choice between 29.♕xd6 ♕xd6 30.♖xd6 ♘c5 31.f5! ♘xe4 32.♗xe4 ♖xe4 33.fxg6, with a huge advantage in the endgame, and the immediate 29.f5!?, launching a direct assault.

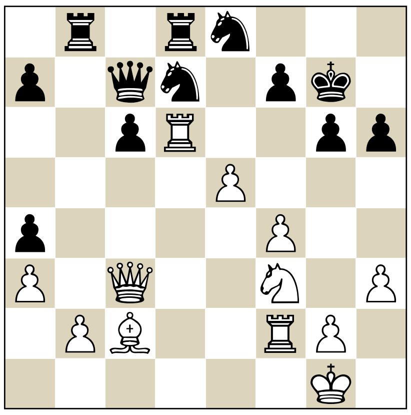
27.♕xc4 b5 28.♕b4! The final finesse.



28...bxa4 29.♖xd6 Now Black falls apart, there is no defence against e4-e5. **29...♖ab8** 29...♘xe4 30.♗xe4 ♖xe4 31.♖xd7 loses on the spot. **30.♕d2**



30...♖ed8 30...♖xb2 loses to 31.e5 ♘e4 32.♕d4! ♘xf2 33.♕xb2.
30...♖e6 31.♖xe6 fxe6 does not help either: 32.♘d4 ♘f8, and now the most aesthetic way to finish the game off is 33.♕d3! c5 34.♘xe6+! ♘xe6 35.e5.
31.e5 ♘e8 32.♕c3

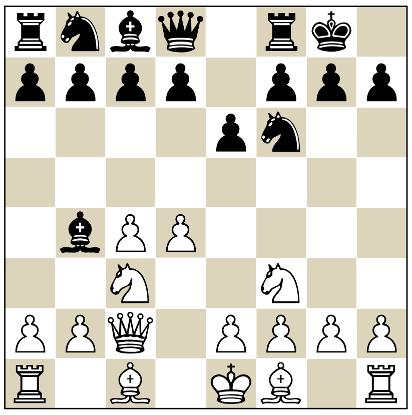


The rest is easy.
32...♘b6 33.♖xc6 ♕b7 34.f5 ♘d5 34...♖bc8 35.♘d4! is totally lost. **35.♕c5 ♕xb2 36.fxg6 f6 37.♘d4**
And Black resigned.

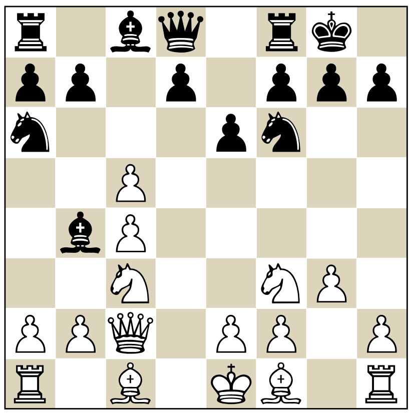
NOTES BY
Nikita Vitiugov

NI 21.6 – E32
Nikita Vitiugov
Dmitry Andreikin
Nizhny Novgorod 2013 (9)

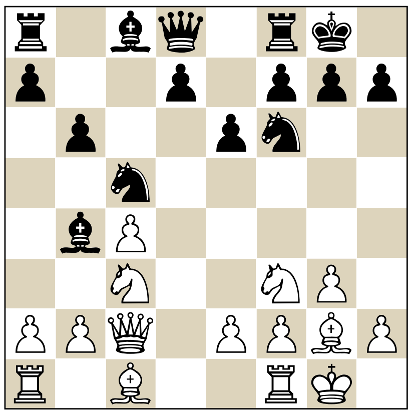
The situation before the last round was simple – if there was a definite result in the game between Nepomniachtchi and Kramnik, then victory would give me third place. Although not a great achievement in itself, it would give me a place in next year's Super Final. And this is already something – life is always difficult for the Elo-favourites in the Premier League (the top finishers in the two preliminary Premier Leagues qualify for the Super Final that decides on the Russian champion – ed.).
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 0-0
The most solid response.
5.♘f3



Everything is new that is old and has been forgotten. Tired of the mass of good lines for Black after 5.a3 and having lost faith in the forcing 5.e4, White has reverted to the once-abandoned knight move.
5...c5 6.dxc5 ♘a6 7.g3
But this is the trend of 2013. This variation, which used to be considered harmless, has been revived by those who like an easy life in the opening. Indeed, now Black's choice is limited. At the present day Morozevich's 7.c6!? does not give White such comfort.



7...♘xc5 8.♗g2 b6?!
Black simply wants to play chess. Everything has its price – for this he has to be satisfied with an inferior game on emerging from the opening.
The main continuation 8...♘ce4 leads to more forcing play after 9.0-0 ♘xc3 (9...♗xc3 10.bxc3 d5 11.♘g5 ♘d6 12.cxd5 exd5 13.♖d1 ♗f5 14.♕b3 h6 15.♘h3 ♗xh3 16.♗xh3 ♖e8 17.♗g2 ♖xe2 18.♗xd5 ♘xd5 19.♕xd5 ♕f6 20.♗f4 ♘e4 21.♕d3 ♘xc3 22.♖ac1 ♘xd1 23.♕xe2 ♘c3 24.♕c4 and the black knight was lost, Mamedyarov-Topalov, Beijing 2013) 10.bxc3 ♗e7 11.e4 d6 12.e5 dxe5 13.♘xe5 ♕c7 14.♕e2 ♘d7 15.♗f4 ♘xe5 16.♗xe5 ♗d6 17.♖fe1 ♖b8 18.♖ad1 ♗xe5 19.♕xe5 ♕xe5 20.♖xe5 b6 21.c5 with the better endgame in Dreev-Azarov, Tromsø 2013.
9.0-0



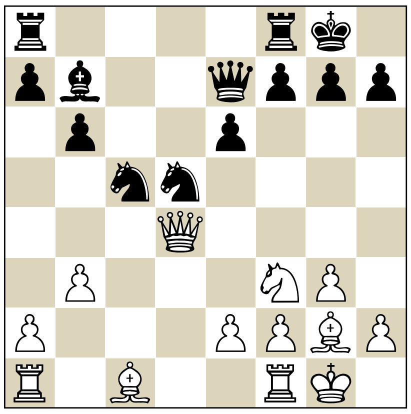
9...♗xc3
If 9...♗b7 White has the cunning ruse 10.♘b5!, when the bishop on b4 is forced to extricate itself. For example, 10...♘ce4 11.♘g5 d5 12.♖d1 ♕e7 13.♘xe4 ♘xe4 14.a3 a6 15.axb4 axb5 16.♖xa8 ♖xa8 17.cxd5 exd5 18.♗e3 ♖c8 19.♕b3, with an obvious advantage

for White in Radjabov-Nisipeanu, Bucharest 2013.

10.♕xc3 ♗b7 11.b3 d5 A concrete approach. After 11...♕e7 12.♗b2 the knight on f6 would be less mobile.

12.cxd5 Life is easier for Black after 12.♗b2?! ♘ce4 13.♕b4 dxc4 14.♖fd1 (14.♕xc4?! ♖c8) 14...♕c8 15.♕xc4 ♕xc4 16.bxc4 ♘c5.

12...♘xd5 13.♕d4 ♕e7



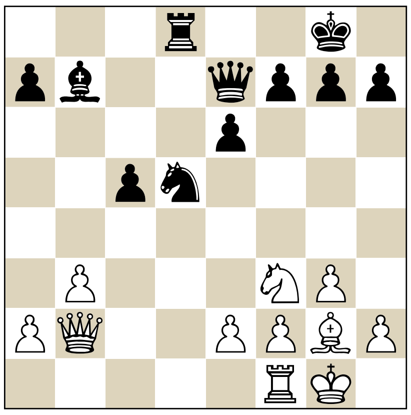
14.♗a3 Of course, it would be nice to weaken the black king's position, but in the variation 14.♗b2 f6 15.♗a3 ♖ac8 16.♖ac1 e5 from afar I did not notice the important move 17.♕h4!, maintaining unpleasant pressure.

14...♖fd8 15.♖ac1 ♖ac8 16.♗xc5 A rather dry approach, but all the same no other opportunities in the position are to be expected.

16...♖xc5

During the game the alternative 16...bxc5 17.♕b2 ♘b6 18.♕a3 seemed more accurate to me.

17.♖xc5 bxc5 18.♕b2



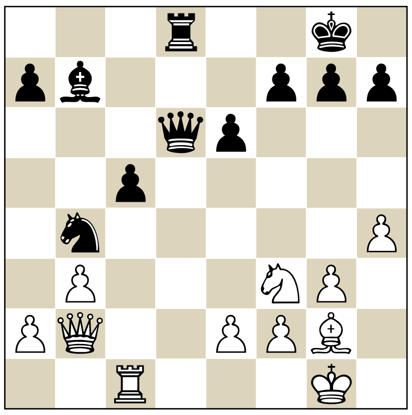
18...♘b4?! And this is definitely not right. After describing the arc d5-b4-a6-c7 the knight will return to the centre, but by that point the situation will have radically changed.

BORIS DOLMATOVSKY

Those are the kind of cups you can expect in a museum! The top finishers in the 2013 Russian Championship: Peter Svidler, Ian Nepomniachtchi and Nikita Vitiugov.

The placing of the other pieces should have been improved, keeping the knight in its strong position – 18...♗a6 19.♖c1 ♕c7.

19.♖c1 ♕d6 20.h4



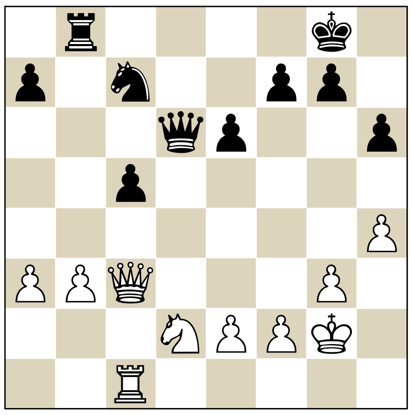
On the one hand, White plays slowly and allows Black to make an escape square in reply. But on the other hand, in many variations White acquires the resource h4-h5, which did indeed help him at the required moment in the game.

20...h6 21.a3 ♘a6

If 21...♘c6 White would have had to spend a tempo on 22.e3, since he gains no advantage with either 22.♕c3 ♘d4 23.♘xd4 cxd4 24.♕c7 ♕xc7 25.♖xc7 ♗xg2 26.♔xg2 d3, or 22.♕c2 c4 23.b4 a5 24.b5 ♘e7 25.♕xc4 ♕xa3 26.♘e5 ♗xg2 27.♔xg2 ♖c8 28.♘c6 ♘xc6 29.bxc6 a4 30.♖d1 ♕b3.

Now events quite rapidly begin to take a very unpleasant turn for Black.

22.♕c3 ♖b8 23.♘d2 ♗xg2 24.♔xg2 ♘c7 Possibly Black should have defended passively, but playing with a knight on a6 is no pleasure.



25.♕e3!

An important move, which, in combination with White's 28th, increases his advantage to critical proportions.

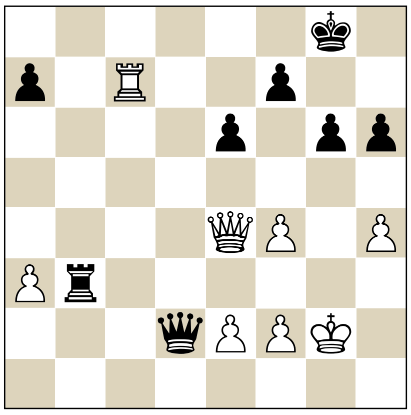
25...♘d5 26.♕xc5 ♘f4+ 27.gxf4 ♕xd2 28.♕e5

The only way – 28.♕xa7 ♕d5+ 29.f3 ♖a8 30.♕e3 ♖xa3 and Black should be able to defend.

Nizhny Novgorod 2013 cat.XVIII

					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		TPR
1	Peter Svidler	IGM	RUS	2740	*	1	½	½	1	½	½	½	1	1	6½	2857
2	Ian Nepomniachtchi	IGM	RUS	2702	0	*	1	1	1	½	1	½	½	1	6½	2861
3	Nikita Vitiugov	IGM	RUS	2729	½	0	*	½	1	½	½	1	1	½	5½	2772
4	Vladimir Kramnik	IGM	RUS	2796	½	0	½	*	0	½	1	1	1	1	5½	2765
5	Dmitry Andreikin	IGM	RUS	2706	0	0	0	1	*	1	½	1	½	1	5	2738
6	Sergey Karjakin	IGM	RUS	2762	½	½	½	½	0	*	½	½	½	1	4½	2689
7	Ernesto Inarkiev	IGM	RUS	2695	½	0	½	0	½	½	*	1	1	½	4½	2696
8	Aleksey Goganov	IM	RUS	2575	½	½	0	0	0	½	0	*	1	1	3½	2629
9	Alexander Motylev	IGM	RUS	2676	0	½	0	0	½	½	0	0	*	1	2½	2532
10	Anton Shomoev	IGM	RUS	2579	0	0	½	0	0	0	½	0	0	*	1	2358

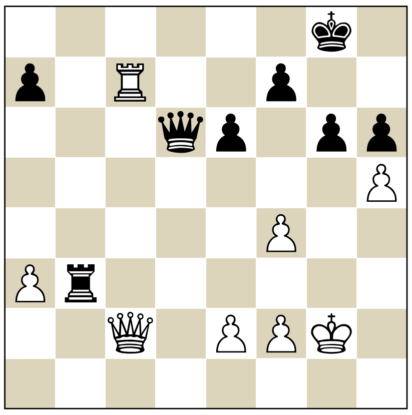
28...♖xb3 29.♖c8+ ♔h7 30.♕e4+ g6 31.♖c7 ♔g8



32.h5 At the informal banquet after the tournament Sergey Shipov rightly suggested 32.f5, when Black is forced to go into an extremely difficult, probably lost rook ending after 32...♕d5 (32...gxf5 33.♕a8+ ♔g7 34.♕e8 ♕d5+ 35.f3 e5 and here we failed in an attempt to mate the black king by 36.♖c8, which proves unsuccessful, overlooking an important resource: 36.♖d7! ♖b8 37.♕e7 ♕b3 38.♕xe5+ and White must win) 33.♕xd5 exd5 34.fxg6 fxg6 35.♖xa7.

32...♕d6? The last chance was 32...♕d5 33.♕xd5 exd5 34.hxg6 fxg6 35.♖xa7 d4 36.♖d7 ♖b2 37.♔f3 ♖b3+ 38.♔e4 ♖xa3 39.♔xd4, but I was confident about White's position – in Nizhny Novgorod I was successful in rook endings.

33.♕c2

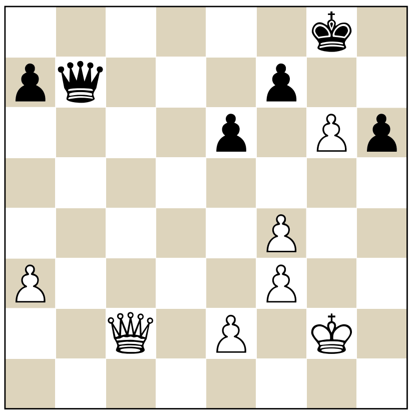


33...♖b7

33...♕d5+ would not have fundamentally changed anything, but merely allowed White a choice: 34.f3 (or 34.e4!? ♕d3 35.♕xd3 ♖xd3 36.hxg6 fxg6 37.♖xa7) 34...♖b7 35.♖xb7 ♕xb7 36.hxg6.

34.♖xb7 ♕d5+ 35.f3 ♕xb7 36.hxg6

The queen endgame is lost for Black, and it is quite easy for White to play.



36...♔g7

Or 36...f5 37.♕c3 and White wins.

37.gxf7 ♕xf7 38.♕e4 ♔g8 39.a4

The advance of the a-pawn, creating the future threat of an invasion on b7, proves decisive.

39...♕g7+ 40.♔h2 ♕f7 41.a5 ♕h5+ 42.♔g2 ♕xa5 43.♕xe6+ ♔g7 44.f5 Black resigned.

Having missed just one Super Final over the past eight years, I should mention that the idea of changing the venue of the final Russian tournament proved, in my view, to be a great success. For a long time, not to put it more forcefully, one has not seen such a lively interest in the tournament on the part of the spectators – in Moscow it was only the final rounds, determining the champion, that drew some attention. And to judge by the abundance of interesting games, for the players also the leisurely tempo of life was more to their liking than the bustle of the capital.

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BORIS DOLMATOVSKY

Ravishing, bright and successful. 'Natalia Pogonina, Alexandra Kosteniuk and Valentina Gunina – These three can enhance any women's tournament.'

NOTES BY
Valentina Gunina

NI 24.15 – E32
Valentina Gunina
Baira Kovanova
Nizhny Novgorod 2013 (6)

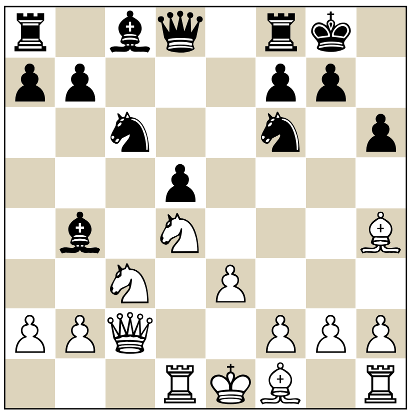
The key game from the 6th round. Baira and I both had 4 points.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 0-0 5.♘f3
The main move is 5.a3, after which there is a great deal of theory.

5...d5 This move is more characteristic of the Ragozin Variation. 5...c5 leads to normal variations of the Nimzo-Indian Defence.

6.cxd5 exd5 7.♗g5 c5 8.e3 cxd4
If Black had played 8...♘bd7 the main position of the Westphalia Defence would have been reached.

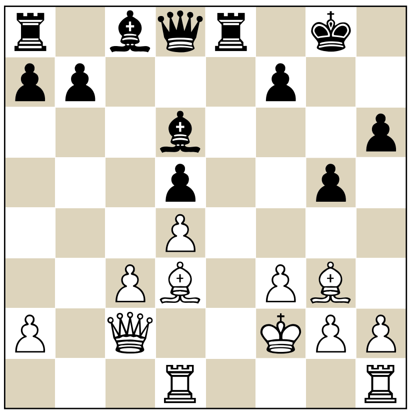
9.♘xd4 ♘c6 10.♖d1 h6 11.♗h4



11...g5 Black has to play this, as otherwise she will simply have problems with the d5-pawn.

12.♗g3 ♘e4 13.f3 I wanted to achieve a complicated position.

13...♘xc3 14.bxc3 ♘xd4 15.exd4 ♗d6 16.♗d3 ♖e8+ 17.♔f2

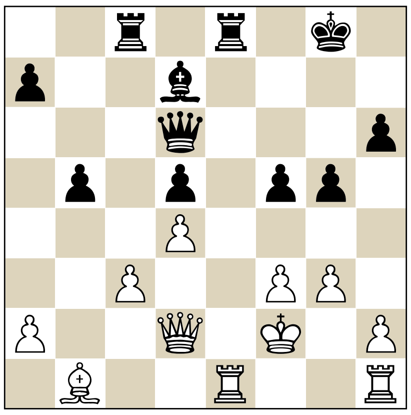


An equal position has been reached, but it seemed to me to be a very complicated one to play.

17...♕c7 18.♕b3 ♗e6 19.♗b1
With the idea of placing the queen in front and attempting to reach the desired h7-square.

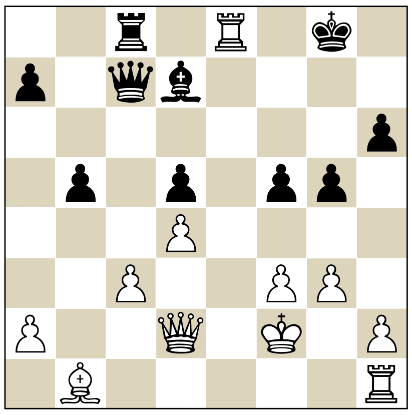
19...♖ac8 20.♕c2 f5 21.♗xd6 ♕xd6 22.♖de1
I wanted to leave the other rook on h1, to have the possibility of playing h4.

22...♗d7 23.g3 b5 24.♕d2



24...♕c7?!
A dubious move, after which White gains an advantage. Black should have played 24...♕a3 25.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 26.h4 ♖c8 27.hxg5 ♖xc3 28.♕e2 hxg5 29.♗xf5 (or 29.♖h5 g4 30.fxg4 fxg4 31.♖h8+ ♔xh8 32.♕e5+ ♔g8 33.♕g5+ ♔h8 34.♕h5+ ♔g8 35.♕g5+) 29...♗xf5 30.♕e8+ ♔g7 31.♕e5+ ♔g6 32.♕e8+, which in both cases would have led to a draw by perpetual check. A logical result, since from the opening White did not gain any advantage.

25.♖xe8+



25...♗xe8
If 25...♖xe8 there would have followed 26.h4, aiming at the weakness of the g5- and h6-pawns (for example, if

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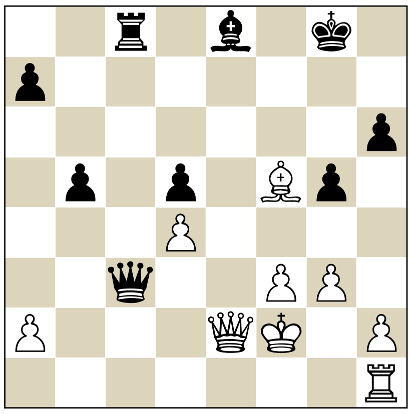
26...♕d8? Black immediately loses a pawn after 27.hxg5 ♕xg5 28.♕xg5+ hxg5 29.♖h5), and after the best move 26...g4 27.fxg4 Black has to play 27...f4 (otherwise she is immediately lost after 27...fxg4 28.♕xh6) 28.♕xf4 ♕xf4+ 29.gxf4 ♗xg4 30.♗d3, when White is a pawn up with good winning chances.

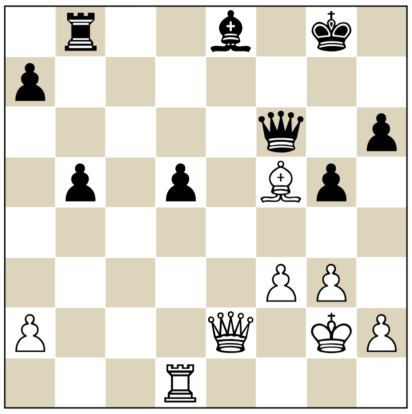
26.♗xf5 ♕xc3 27.♕e2



27...♕xd4+

Black could also have played 27...♖a8, but after defending the d4-pawn by 28.♖d1 White would then have increased the pressure on the black king.

28.♔g2 ♖b8 29.♖d1 ♕f6



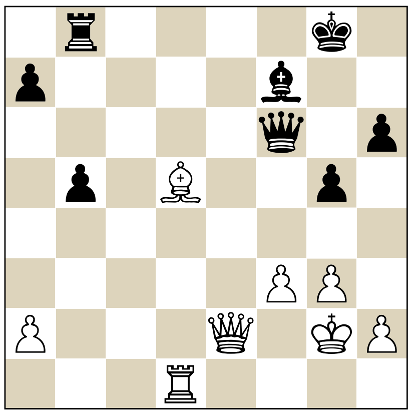
30.♗e6+

With this move I lose half of my advantage. The best move in the position was 30.♖xd5, but with time-trouble approaching I wanted to achieve more certainty by exchanging the bishops, which in itself reduces the chances of blundering. I was hoping that my opponent would also want to reduce the number of pieces.

30...♗f7

It was better for Black to play 30...♔h8, retaining the bishop to cover her king.

31.♗xd5



The position is more pleasant for White, thanks to the different placing of the kings. White's is more securely covered and, most important, the position is more difficult for Black to play.

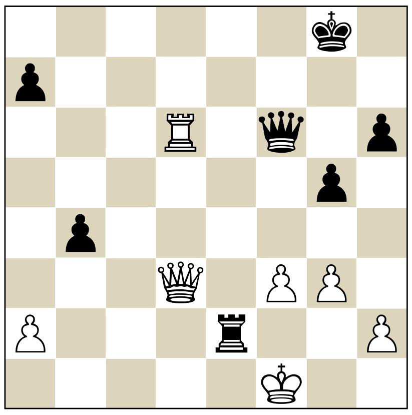
31...♗xd5?

A move which immediately gives White a big advantage. 31...b4 was better.

32.♖xd5 b4 33.♕d3

33.♖d7!? was an accurate move, which nevertheless was difficult to make with us both short of time.

33...♖e8 34.♖d6 ♖e2+ 35.♔f1



35...♖e3??

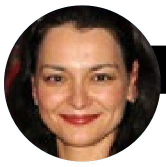
This loses quickly. 35...♖e6 was a difficult move to make, since the rook will come under a pin, but after 36.♕d5 ♔f7 37.♖a6 there is still all to play for.

36.♕c4+

The rest is not complicated.

36...♕f7 37.♖d8+ ♔g7 38.♕d4+ ♕f6 39.♖d7+

Black resigned, since after 39...♔g6 White simply captures the rook.

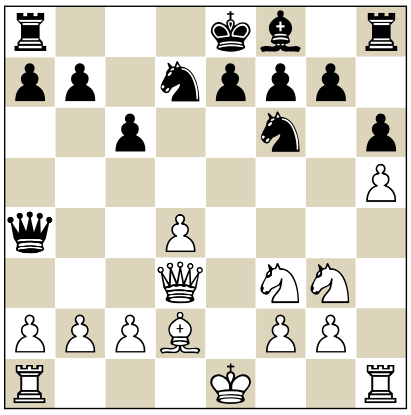


NOTES BY
Alexandra Kosteniuk

CK 12.2 – B19
Alexandra Kosteniuk
Daria Charochkina
Nizhny Novgorod 2013 (7)

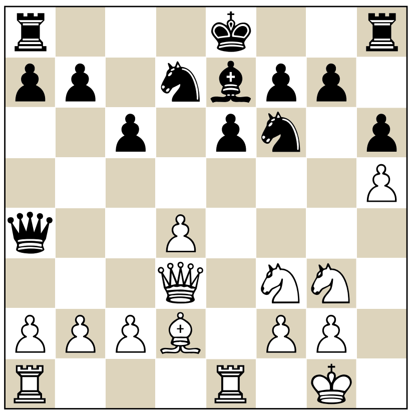
In the Super Final in Nizhny Novgorod I won five games. The three wins with the black pieces against Tatiana Kosintseva, Anastasia Bodnaruk and Alina Kashlinskaya were gained in complicated battles, not without errors, and to investigate the intricate variations one would need to spend rather a lot of time. The win with White over Natalia Pogonina was outwardly unspectacular – with the unhurried accumulation of small pluses and the gradual conversion of the advantage. This was a game of which I could certainly be proud, but for a commentary one usually chooses vivid and memorable games, and so I am offering you my win from the 7th round against Daria Charochkina, a rather straightforward effort and not too difficult to comment on as you will see.

1.e4 c6 2.♘c3 d5 3.d4 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♗f5 5.♘g3 ♗g6 6.h4 h6 7.♘f3 ♘d7 8.h5 ♗h7 9.♗d3 ♗xd3 10.♕xd3 ♘gf6 11.♗f4 ♕a5+ 12.♗d2 ♕a4



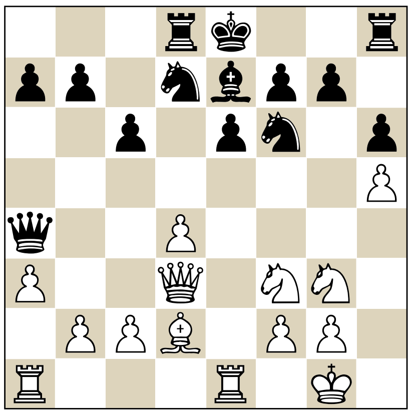
Black tries to prevent White from castling on the queenside. But, as is well known, in chess there are two sides. The more standard move in this position is 12...♕c7.

13.0-0 e6 14.♖fe1 ♗e7

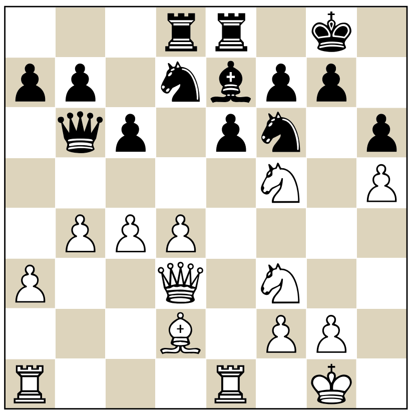


15.a3!? White invites Black to make a decision about castling. 15.b3!? ♕a3 16.♘e5, and Black will need a number of moves to bring the queen back into play: 16...0-0 17.♘c4 ♕a6.

15...♖d8



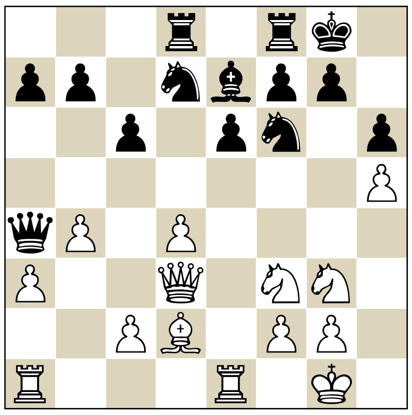
16.b4!? I continue to wait for my opponent to castle, while also completely cutting off the black queen's retreat. Previously White played more quietly – 16.b3 – but during the game I did not even consider the idea of driving the black queen back to c7: 16...♕b5 17.c4 ♕b6 18.b4 0-0 19.♘f5 ♖fe8 20.♖xe6 fxe6 21.♘xg7 ♔xg7 22.♗xh6+ ♔h8 23.♗g7+ ♔xg7 24.♕g6+ ♔h8 25.♘g5 ♘e5 26.dxe5 ♖f8 27.h6 ♕xf2+ 28.♔xf2 ♘e4+ 29.♔g1 1-0, Fedorchuk-Cyborowski, Lubniewice 2005.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

16...0-0

Practically forced. The black queen can no longer run away: 16...♕b5 17.c4 ♕b6 18.♗f4.

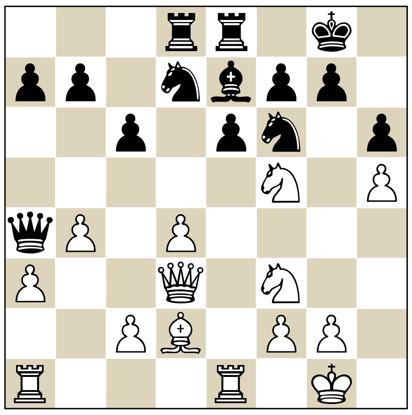


17.♘f5!

Only forward! White could also have played the quieter 17.c4.

17...♖fe8

After 17...exf5 18.♖xe7 in the end Black will lose the pawn on f5 and will be forced to defend a pawn down.

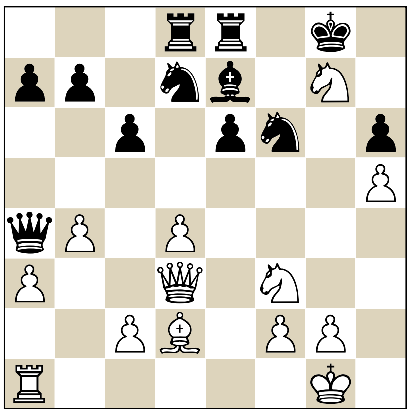


18.♖xe6!!

I would have liked to write that 'here, like a bolt from the blue, there followed...', but, frankly speaking, such ideas occur quite frequently in similar structures, and besides, the position of the black queen simply forces White to seek such sacrifices. White has practically no choice. For example, after 18.♘xe7+ ♖xe7 19.♘h4 ♘c5! (19...♖ee8) Black can seize the initiative, and after other sacrifices the black queen succeeds in coming into play: 18.♘xh6+ gxh6 19.♗xh6 ♕b5, 18.♘xg7 ♔xg7 19.♖xe6 ♕b5, or 18.

♗xh6 exf5. So that, by playing 17.♘f5, White burned her boats behind her. Besides, after calculating all the variations, I realized that if, afraid of this cascade of sacrifices, I did not play 18.♖xe6, and later it transpired that this move was correct, I would be unable to forgive myself.

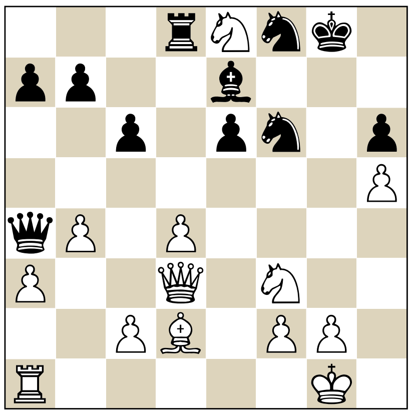
18...fxe6 19.♘xg7



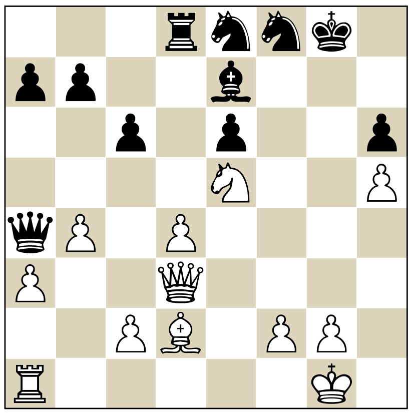
19...♘f8 If 19...♔xg7 White wins prettily after 20.♗xh6+! ♔h8 (20...♔xh6 21.♕g6 mate) 21.♗g7+! (the only continuation of the attack, but sufficient for a win) 21...♔g8 (21...♔xg7 22.♕g6+ ♔h8 23.♘g5) 22.♕g6 ♘f8 23.♗xf8+ ♔xf8 24.♘g5 with inevitable mate. A splendid demonstration of the attacking potential of the 'queen and knight' combination! When I saw this variation during the game, I was essentially convinced about the strength of the move ♖xe6. The computer considers the strongest for Black in this position to be 19...♗f8 20.♘xe8 ♖xe8 (20...♘xe8 21.♕g6+ ♗g7 22.♕xe6+ ♔h8 23.♗xh6) 21.♕g6+, but during the game I reckoned that in any case I would have three pawns for a piece plus an attack, which is more than sufficient compensation: 21...♔h8 (21...♗g7 22.♗xh6 ♖e7) 22.♘e5 ♖e7 23.♖e1 ♕xa3 24.♘f7+ ♖xf7 25.♕xf7 and White's attack continues.

> 'White managed to play practically ideally, while Black performed the role of co-author of this elegant little masterpiece.'

20.♘xe8



20...♖xe8? After this move White's attack develops of its own accord. The capture of the other piece, 20...♘xe8 21.♘e5 (21.c4!?), was more resilient:

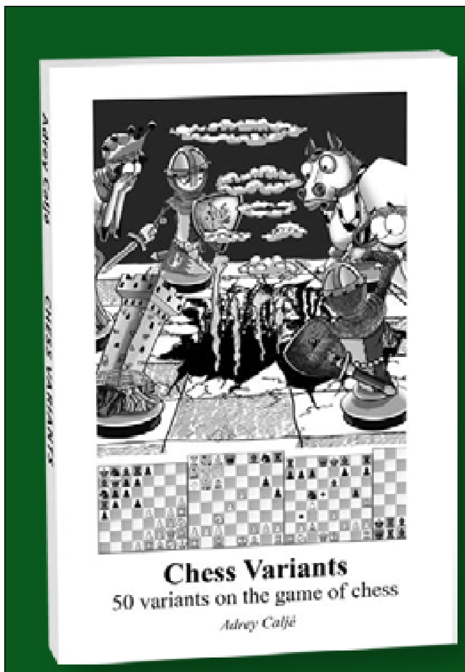


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 21...c5 22.♗xh6 and White wins;

B) 21...♗f6:

B1) at the board I mainly calculated 22.♕g3+:



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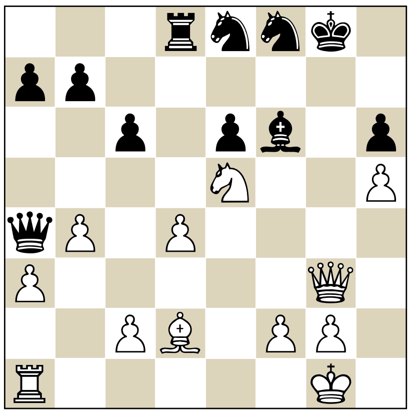
BORIS DOLMATOVSKY

Alexandra Kosteniuk: 'Only forward!'



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

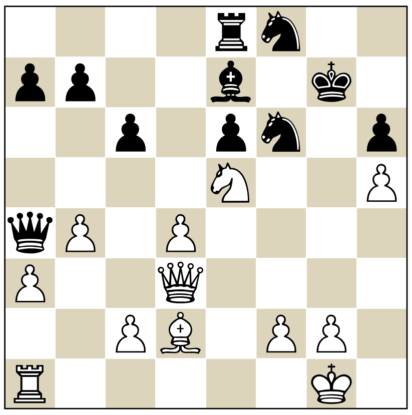
B11) 22...♔h7 23.♗xh6! ♗xe5 (23...♔xh6 24.♘f7+ ♔h7 25.♘xd8 ♗xd8 26.♕b8!) 24.dxe5 ♔xh6 25.♕f4+ ♔xh5 26.♖e1 and Black is lost;

B12) 22...♘g7 23.♗xh6 ♗xe5 24.dxe5 ♖d7 25.♗e3, with compensation;

B2) possibly the strongest here is 22.♖e1 ♗g7 23.♗xh6! ♗xh6 24.♕f3 ♕xc2 25.♕f7+ ♔h8 26.♕e7 ♕d2 27.♘f7+ ♔g8 28.♘xh6+ ♕xh6 29.♕xd8, with advantage;

C) 21...♘g7. It is obvious that White's compensation for the sacrificed piece is more than sufficient, but to find the accurate continuation of the attack White would have had to expend far more effort here after 22.♗xh6, when White already has three pawns for the piece and a continuing attack on the king, although the path to victory is as yet not so obvious.

21.♘e5 ♔g7



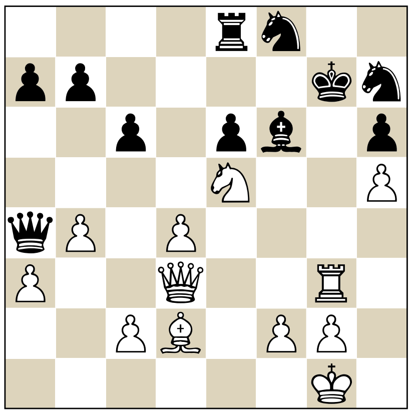
22.♖e1!

White also wins with the more direct 22.♕g3+ ♔h7 23.♕f4 ♕xc2 24.♖c1 ♕f5 25.♕xh6+ ♔g8 26.♖c3 ♘xh5 27.g4!, but the simple and logical idea of bringing another piece into the attack by ♖e1-e3-g3 is so strong that, when I saw this manoeuvre, I abandoned any attempts to find a more forcing way to win.

22...♘6h7 23.♖e3

Continuing my plan, although here there was already more than one way to win, for example, 23.♕g3+ ♘g5 24.♗xg5 ♗xg5 (24...hxg5 25.♕f3) 25.f4 ♕xc2 26.fxg5.

23...♗f6 24.♖g3+



White has completed her manoeuvre and the remaining moves are already a matter of taste.

24...♘g5 25.f4 ♖d8 26.♘f3 ♘h7 27.fxg5 hxg5 28.♘xg5 ♗xd4+ 29.♔h1

Black resigned.

A short but very attractive game, where White managed to play practically ideally, while Black performed the role of co-author of this elegant little masterpiece. ■

Nizhny Novgorod women 2013 **cat.VIII**

					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		TPR
1	Valentina Gunina	IGM	RUS	2506	*	½	1	½	1	1	½	1	1	½	7	2662
2	Alexandra Kosteniuk	IGM	RUS	2495	½	*	1	½	0	½	1	1	1	1	6½	2609
3	Natalija Pogonina	WGM	RUS	2485	0	0	*	½	1	½	1	1	½	1	5½	2524
4	Ekaterina Kovalevskaya	IM	RUS	2410	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	0	½	1	4½	2452
5	Baira Kovanova	WGM	RUS	2396	0	1	0	½	*	½	0	½	1	1	4½	2454
6	Aleksandra Goryachkina	WGM	RUS	2436	0	½	½	½	½	*	½	½	1	½	4½	2449
7	Tatiana Kosintseva	IGM	RUS	2515	½	0	0	½	1	½	*	0	½	½	3½	2361
8	Anastasia Bodnaruk	IM	RUS	2459	0	0	0	1	½	½	1	*	0	½	3½	2367
9	Alina Kashlinskaya	WGM	RUS	2435	0	0	½	½	0	0	½	1	*	½	3	2324
10	Daria Charochkina	WGM	RUS	2343	½	0	0	0	0	½	½	½	½	*	2½	2294

Short Stories

Return to Indonesia

Somewhere among my shelves, accumulating dust, is a book in Javanese on the 1982 First Lady Cup in Surakarta and Denpasar. This was an undeniably exotic but also strong tournament for the time, with 18 Grandmasters, in an era when that currency was not yet totally debauched. Quaintly, this most leisurely affair, comprising of an extraordinary 25 rounds, started a day late due to the pernickety Walter Browne who complained, doing his best Bobby Fischer prima donna impersonation, that the black pieces were too reflective – thus obliging the organisers to stay up all night painting the pieces matt. The immense duration of the tournament enabled the American IM Ron Henley, who tied for first place with his overly-fastidious compatriot, to attain the remarkable hole-in-one of earning his GM title at a single attempt. In the last round Henley famously defeated Tony Miles in a seismically interrupted 26-move rout. The Englishman obtained excellent prospects in the Chigorin Defence, which he had prepared with Raymond Keene the previous day (a curious vignette in view of their later very public spat), before the position abruptly tipped tectonically in the Texan's favour.

Regrettably, I did not visit Indonesia until 1996, when I faced my old friend Utut Adianto – Sportsman of the Year for 1995 – in a 6-game match in Jakarta, that attracted great national media attention. The superb hospitality of the hosts, particularly Kristianus Liem, who also accompanied me to Bali for a brief holiday, made it a most memorable and enjoyable experience. Despite a busted laptop, I eventually prevailed, which still makes me wonder whether knowing what one is doing in the opening is really more important than feeling fresh. Incidentally, I had first met the physically slight and relatively unknown Adianto in Round 3 of the 1980 World Junior Championship in Dortmund. He gave notice of his natural talent when I barely survived a somewhat extravagant 3...♘f6 French Tarrasch. A few years later I would ruin his chances of a GM norm at the Lugano Open in 1986. Of course, this proved no more than a minor, temporary set-back on a successful chess career – the finest in the history of his country – and, generously, he has never taken my harsh competitiveness as a personal affront.

Since its inception three years ago, I had received invitations to the Indonesia Open, but it was not until this October that I was finally able to attend. From quiet beginnings, it has rapidly but unobtrusively grown into one of the more important events of its kind in the chess calendar. Indeed, due to the initial absence (later rectified) of a website, I failed to observe the doubling of the prize fund to a very substantial $100,000. This does not quite put it in the Gibraltar class, but it is certainly a lot better than most. Correspondingly, the entry has strengthened considerably. Last year's top seed – Ivan Sokolov – was only ranked 6th this time, in a list headed by European Champion Alexander Moiseenko.

The tournament began inauspiciously when I missed my connecting Etihad flight in Abu Dhabi. Thanks to the communicative wonders of Facebook, I was informed by Sergey Tiviakov that Alexey Dreev was likewise stranded in the UAE and suggested that we meet up. Alas, on account of his Russian passport which, though not quite of pariah-status, confers fewer benefits than citizenship of the EU, my colleague was unable to leave the terminal, whereas I was comfortably ensconced overnight at a hotel along the Corniche. Upon landing in Jakarta the following evening, we endured a seemingly interminable wait for my luggage (Alexey had bravely squeezed everything he deemed essential into a carry-on bag) before, after a slight mix-up, we were met and transported to the centrally located old Sahid Jaya hotel – the venue for the tournament.

Wisely preferring not to over-cram the hall, participation was restricted to 108 players from a wide variety of countries, with just a handful being below the 2200 level. This meant that, even at the start, there was no opportunity to quietly doze one's way through jet-lag. Unlike the Spice Net Open in Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania, in June, where my biggest problem in the first round was to prevent my inexperienced opponent from making illegal moves, here I already faced the veteran Grandmaster, Haji Ardiansyah. Incidentally, despite losing to me, he would overcome his rust and eventually finished on a very creditable 7/11, gaining 18.5 rating points in the process.

The seamless organisation ensured that what few problems existed, such as patchily dim lighting on the stage, were quickly and efficiently resolved. Indeed, there was a very friendly and communal atmosphere to the tournament, with all players eating together in a simple but convivial manner. Like in many huge Asian cities, the constant roar of traffic and stifling heat meant that most of the day was, of necessity, spent indoors – but that was hardly an imposition. My only real quibble about an otherwise very enjoyable visit was that the monstrosity of double rounds was foisted upon hapless victims yet again. Should I ever become FIDE despot, it will be the first thing I ban. Given that nine whole days were available for play, this seemed an unnecessary sop to norm-seekers, who apparently now need multiple attempts to get their unworthy awards. When I recall how a fine player like Paul van der Sterren had to struggle for his GM title, it irritates me that the current crop of aspirants has it so easy. Anyway, complaints about the schedule were respectfully acknowledged and it seems likely that the organisers will accede to the collective desire to alter it for next time.

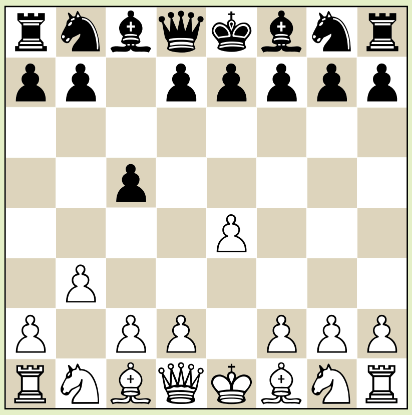
> ‘My only real quibble was the monstrosity of double rounds. Should I ever become FIDE despot, it will be the first thing I ban.’

The tournament was dominated by the technically proficient Alexey Dreev, who began with a blistering 5½/6 after Moiseenko overslept against him and was forfeited. This was an expensive mistake by the Ukrainian who, for the most part, showed excellent form. He had apparently set his alarm, but dozed off again after it rang. Indeed, it is impossible to judge retrospectively, but this moment of somnolence might well have cost him the tournament. Bizarrely, in a scenario reminiscent of the movie ‘Groundhog Day’, the two were paired again, with the same colours, on the same board, just three rounds later. I had been unaware such a possibility was permitted under the FIDE rules, but it is apparently quite correct. This time Moiseenko deigned to show up and after some fight the game was duly drawn.

Your own scribe was becalmed after two early wins, drawing one game after another, but curiously, due to the consistent strength of the field and the inability of most players to break away from the pack, I played the entire tournament on the top four boards. Adding just one additional full-point in Round 7, I needed a last-round victory to achieve anything worthwhile. I was less than overjoyed to be paired against the top-seed, but at least my fate was in my own hands.

SI 48.14 – B20
Nigel Short
Alexander Moiseenko
Open Indonesia 2013 (11)

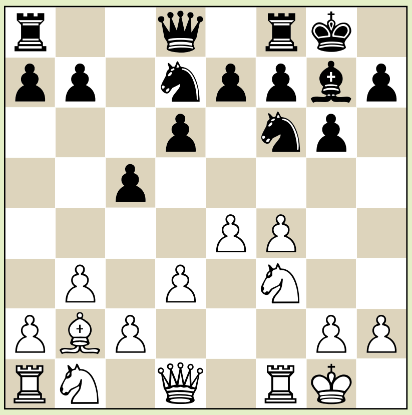
1.e4 c5 2.b3 It is very convenient to play such lowly regarded variations (‘shit’, as Ehsan Ghaem Maghami delicately put it) during morning rounds, as it saves one the trouble of doing any preparation. Recently I became a little concerned when Vladimir Kramnik gave this modest little fianchetto the seal of approval, as I was afraid it might catch on, but so far it has avoided excessive engine scrutiny.



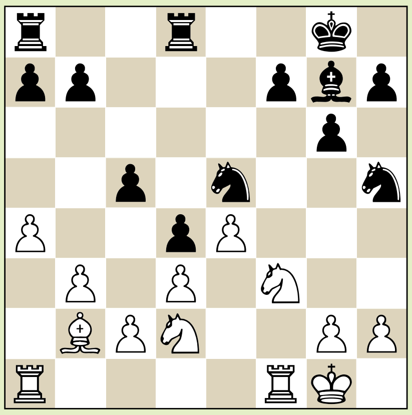
2...d6 3.♗b2 ♘f6 4.♗b5+ ♗d7 5.♗xd7+ ♘bxd7 5...♕xd7 is another option, but then Black has to consider ♗xf6 either now or later. **6.d3** My opponent told me afterwards that he was more familiar with 6.♕e2,

Short Stories

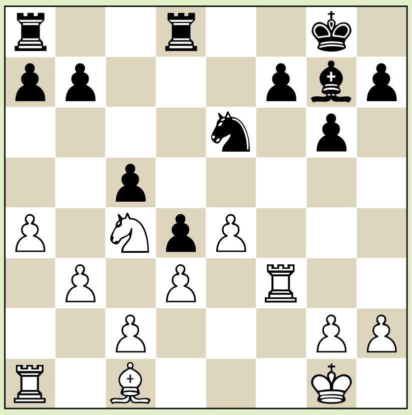
but I saw no great reason to commit my queen too early. **6...g6 7.f4** Leading to a sort of reversed turbo-charged Dutch Defence. **7...♗g7 8.♘f3 0-0 9.0-0**



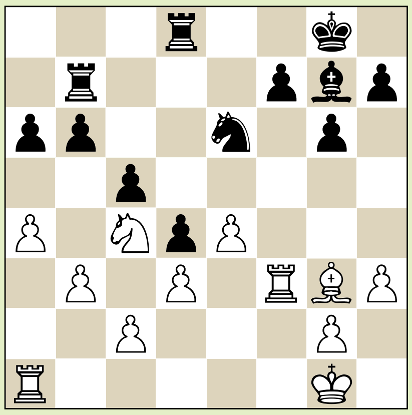
9...d5 9...e5!? is a critical move, after which Black feared and I intended 10.f5! (10.fxe5 ♘g4 equalises pretty comfortably) 10...gxf5 11.♘h4!? fxe4 12.♘f5, with a dangerous initiative for two pawns. **10.♕e1** Avoiding 10.♘bd2?! ♘xe4 11.♗xg7 ♘xd2 12.♗xf8 ♘xf1 13.♗xe7 ♕xe7 14.♔xf1, which is a bit better for Black. **10...d4** Negating the effect of the bishop on b2, but at the expense of a little inflexibility. **11.♕h4 e5** Immediately taking the sting out of a potential White attack. **12.fxe5 ♘h5 13.♕xd8 ♖fxd8** Perhaps 13...♖axd8 is more accurate, but the text choice was made with the intention of queenside activity. **14.♘bd2 ♘xe5 15.a4** Taking stock for the moment, with the queens already exchanged and no immediate threats, it would appear that Black is well on his way to a draw. Indeed, in the post-mortem Moiseenko confessed that he underestimated the danger. However, by analogy with the (reversed) Queen's Indian, White has not only gained several tempi, but also achieved the strategic objective of exchanging f- for e-pawn. It doesn't look like such a big deal, and perhaps it isn't, but the engines, too, support my hunch that White has a steady nagging pull.



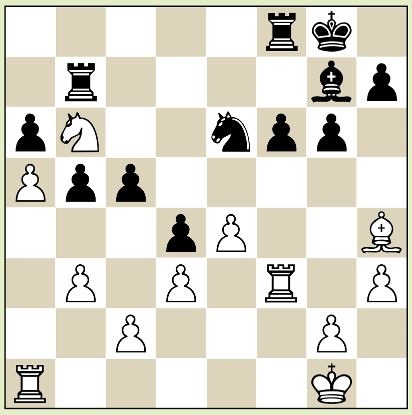
15...♘f4 16.♘c4 A slightly surprising decision. White could also contemplate the ostensibly more energetic 16.♘xe5 ♗xe5 17.♘c4 ♗c7 18.♗a3 b6 19.b4 cxb4 20.♗xb4 ♘e6 but then I was unsure how I would make progress. Basically I didn't want the black bishop defensively positioned on c7 where it controls my knight. **16...♘xf3+** 16...♘xc4 17.bxc4 ♖d7 is possible, and might have been better, but sooner or later White will double rooks on the b-file, leading to pressure. **17.♖xf3 ♘e6 18.♗c1** The beginning of a journey to brighter vistas.



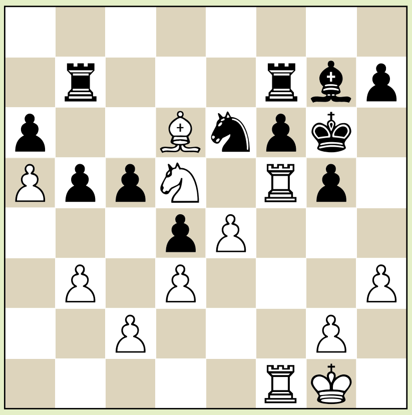
18...b6 19.♗d2 ♖ab8 20.♗e1 a6?! Moiseenko rightly castigated this move afterwards for weakening b6, which, of course, he perfectly well understood at the time. Pschologically this is a very interesting mistake because the vast majority of players, including those rated over 2700, find it difficult to wait passively. Unfortunately, having a bad plan is far worse than having no plan at all. In the latter you can at least react to changing circumstances. **21.♗g3 ♖b7 22.h3!?** This humble advance, which improves the White position by the tiniest amount, turned out to be a cunning choice. I sensed Black wanted to break out so I left my rook on the a-file in anticipation.



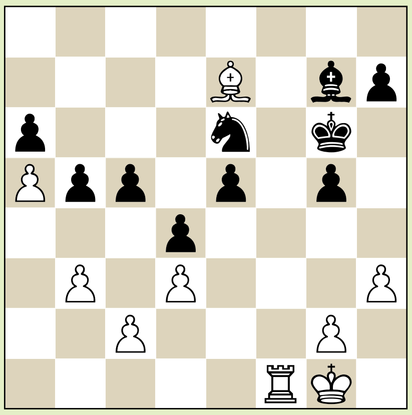
22...f6?! Clearly 22...b5 23.axb5 axb5 24.♘d6 was no good, but Black would do better to avoid this further pawn weakening. **23.♗h4 ♖f8 24.a5!** And now the drawback of Black's 20th is felt. **24...b5 25.♘b6**



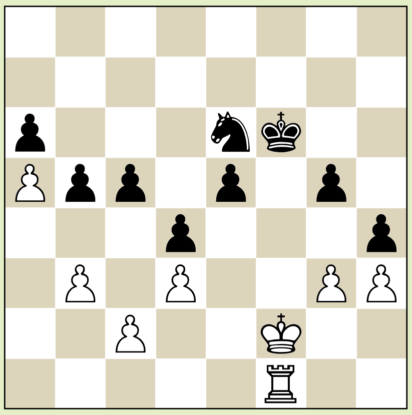
25...g5 Yet another weakening, after which the Black position becomes more or less indefensible. Alternatives, however, were also grim. 25...f5 26.exf5 ♖xf5 27.♖xf5 gxf5 28.♖f1 ♖f7 29.♖e1 and the edifice teeters on collapse. **26.♗g3 ♔f7 27.♖f5 ♖d8** Ruling out ♗d6 for the moment. **28.♖af1 ♔g6 29.♘d5 ♖f8 30.♗d6 ♖ff7**



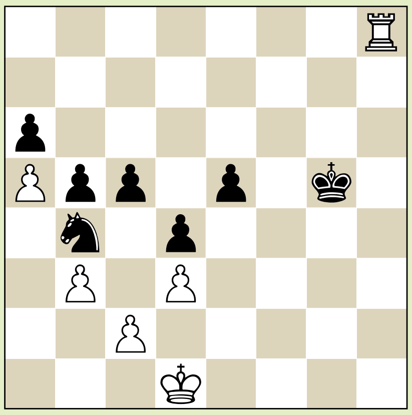
31.e5 Winning directly, but my first slow and sadistic idea 31.g4 was equally good. **31...fxe5 32.♖xf7 ♖xf7 33.♘e7+ ♖xe7 34.♗xe7**



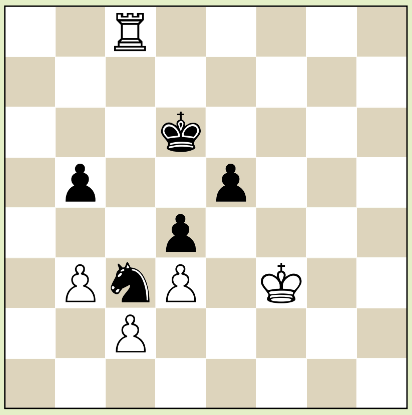
34...h5 For the moment there are no points of entry, but as soon as the rook enters the game the end approaches. **35.♔f2 ♗f6 36.♗xf6 ♔xf6 37.g3 h4**



38.gxh4 The simplest way. Normally one shouldn't exchange pawns when ahead on material in an endgame, but the rook has to breathe. **38...gxh4 39.♖g1 ♘g5 40.♖g4 ♘xh3+ 41.♔f1 ♘f4 42.♖xh4 ♔g5 43.♖h8 ♘d5 44.♔e1 ♘b4 45.♔d1** Black has protected a6 for now, but a pawn is falling.



45...♔f6 46.♖c8 ♔e6 47.♖xc5 ♔d6 48.♖c8 ♘c6 49.♖a8 ♘xa5 50.♖xa6+ ♘c6 51.♔d2 ♔c5 52.♖a8 ♘b4 53.♖c8+ ♔d6 54.♔e2 ♘d5 55.♔f3 ♘c3



56.♖xc3! The fastest route to victory. The king and pawn endgame is hopeless. **56...dxc3 57.♔e4 b4 58.d4 exd4 59.♔xd4 ♔e6 60.♔c4 ♔e5 61.♔xb4 ♔d4 62.♔a4 ♔e3 63.b4** Black resigned.

To my great joy and surprise, this win turned out to be good enough for a share of 2nd-10th prize and I was placed third on tie-break, with the money distributed according to the Hort system. The prize list went down quite far and, as in Gibraltar, the women were amply remunerated – Antoaneta Stefanova collecting the top honour.

This fine tournament could not have happened without the tremendous support of the genial and urbane President of the Indonesian Chess Federation, Mr. Hashim Djojohadikusumo, and Utut Adianto himself – now a Senator with the ruling Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan. Given the vast population and level of media interest, it is by no means absurd to imagine that chess has the potential to become very popular in this country of 237 million – perhaps something like in India, but on a smaller scale. Indeed the players are already financially well supported. So much so, apparently, that I wonder whether the right balance has been struck. On the one hand it is essential that some means of making a decent livelihood exists, as otherwise far too many talents are lost to other professions. On the other hand, if, as hearsay would have it, players are so mollycoddled that they can earn a very good living simply by racking up victories in mediocre tournaments, amply funded by local government, then arguably they have little incentive to improve. None of the younger men have made any real impact on the international stage. Twenty-six year-old Susanto Megaranto, who seemed a very promising teenager when I visited Jakarta with Bessel Kok back in 2006, has at best stagnated and more likely regressed. Women's chess offers greater prospects, however. Irene Sukandar, who was chauffeured by embassy staff for a social visit to my flat in Athens earlier this year, is ranked 92nd in the world. Recently joining her among the ranks of WGMs is 16-year-old Warda Aulia Medina. Indonesians are justly proud of the successes of these ladies, but one senses a degree of complacency and a tendency to set the bar too low. ■

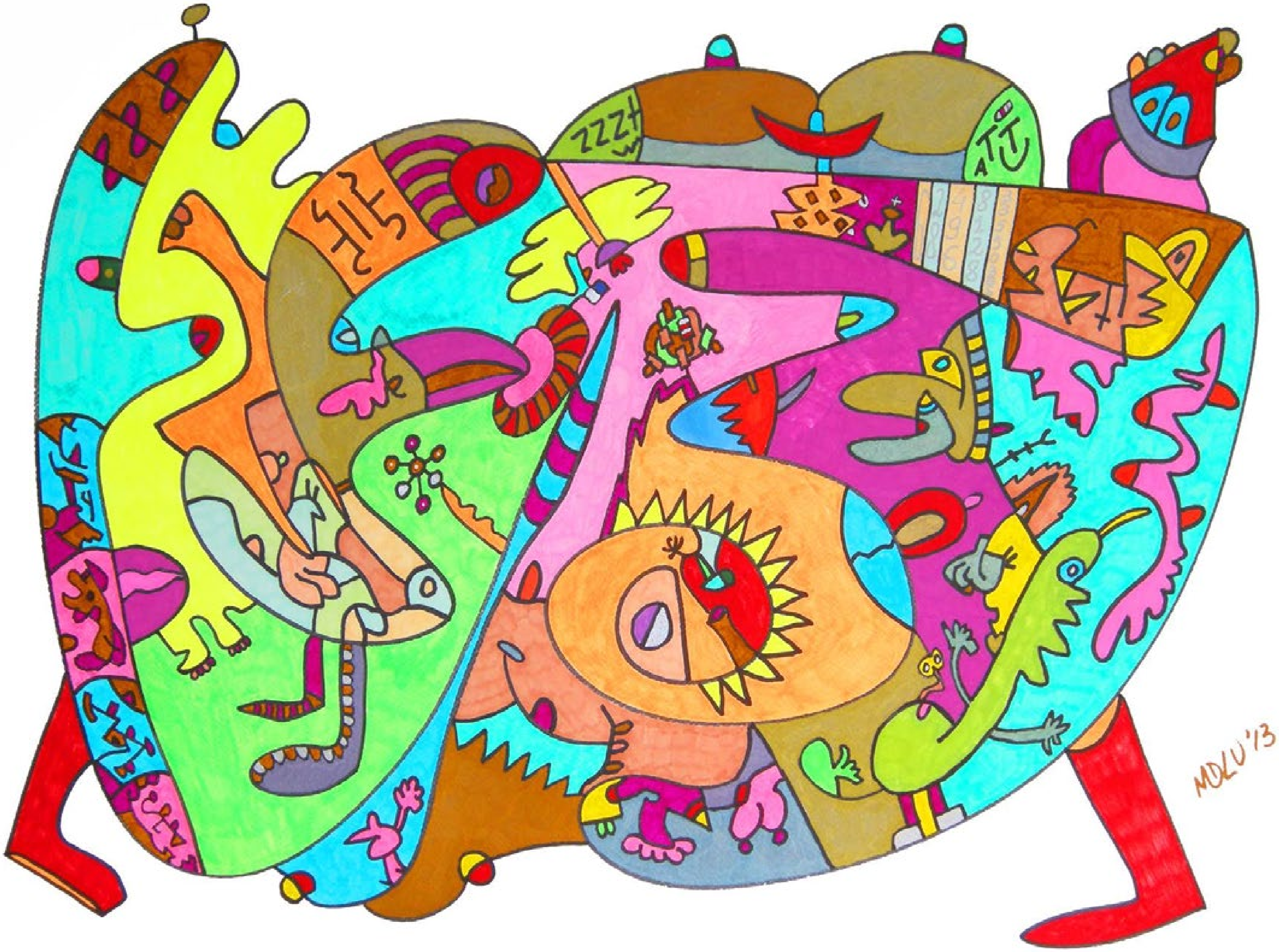
Maximatism

Maxim Dlugy had his first modest exhibit at the **Tretyakov Gallery** during the 2012 World Championship match.

In 1985 he won the Junior World Championship, in 1986 he became an International Grandmaster. **Maxim Dlugy** was one of the leading players in the United States and one of the best blitz players worldwide, when in 1990 he turned his attention to Wall Street. His work for the Russian Growth Fund took him back to his native Russia, where in 2005 he spent 8 months in prison after false accusations, an experience that made him rethink his priorities. He wanted more children, rediscovered his old love blitz and **dedicated himself to painting.** Not any old painting, it's called *Maximatism*!

As some of you may be aware, back in the day when I was a professional chess player, I used to write quite a bit for New In Chess, covering major tournaments around the world. Of course, 26 years ago, when I first wrote for this fine magazine, the chess world was a different place altogether, with annotations based on intuition and solid positional understanding, rather than computer-generated tactics. Eight years ago, when I had my bout with the Russian judicial system, and spent some months in jail awaiting trial before finally being acquitted, I had some time on my hands and used it to analyse a complicated line of the Sämisch King's Indian. When I was released, Garry Kasparov, who was very concerned about my situation, invited me to dinner in Moscow the following day. As I was relaying the various events that had transpired, I mentioned my chess analysis. Surprised, he asked, 'You had a computer in jail?' The mind-set in these years has changed so much that the possibility of analysing a chess opening without the aid of a computer didn't even occur to one of the greatest chess minds in the history of the game.

Years have passed, and although in those 22 years since I officially took a day job as a currency trader at Bankers Trust in New York, I have been an avid competitor on ICC, playing in



chess tournaments proved more and more difficult, as responsibilities and projects started to increase.

The time in jail allowed me to reflect on the priorities in my life and I made a decision to follow my dreams. About seven years ago, I started to spend over 80 per cent of my time in Moscow and gradually began to learn about the chess life in this once great chess city. As it turned out, the Central Chess Club on Gogol Boulevard started to have weekend blitz and rapid tournaments, which gave me a great chance to practise.

I remember my first blitz game 40 years ago, when my parents' friend Igor brought in a chess clock and explained that I needed to press the button after each move. I reached a queen and king versus king endgame, but worrying about the clock, I sacrificed the queen to claim a draw. When Igor explained that I wouldn't have lost anyway, I berated him for not telling me all the rules in advance. That summer my parents took me to Pärnu, the birthplace of Paul Keres. The chess club that bore his name was situated in a courtyard outside the local cinema. I played blitz all month long, with a record of 48 games in one day. As the rule was winner stays, I must have won a few of those games. Blitz was how I learned to play chess.

So, having returned to Moscow, I started playing chess at the Central Chess Club and somehow my hands began to remember where to put the pieces. Since I never took time to make moves, these fast-paced events built up my confidence rather quickly. This year I managed to win prizes in both Aeroflot events, which for a 47-year old retiree is a nice feat!

Besides returning to chess, I had two other dreams: one was to have many children and the other was to become an artist. In the past five years, two more little Dlugy's arrived on Planet Earth and I am still thinking about whether four is the right number!

As for painting, I have always been partial to it, doodling various drawings over the past few decades, but recently, with a renewed sense of urgency, came the desire to make something of it. Last year, during the World Chess Championship match in Moscow, I approached Andrei Fila-

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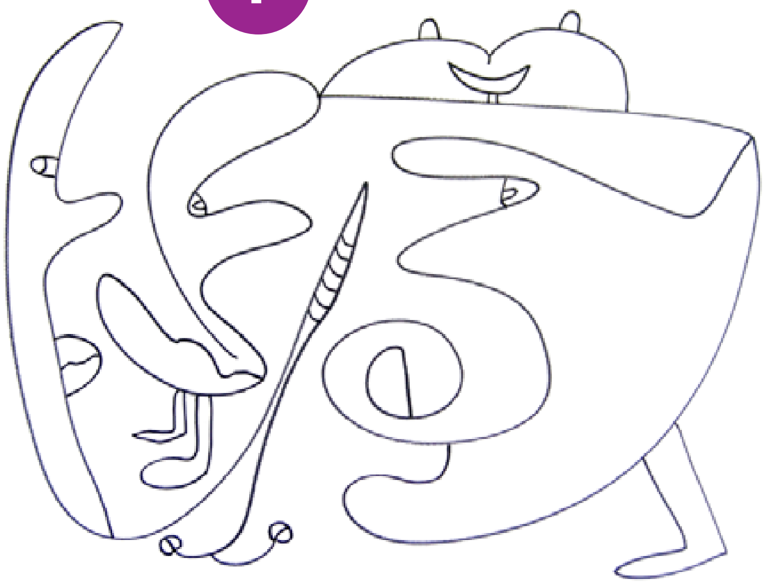

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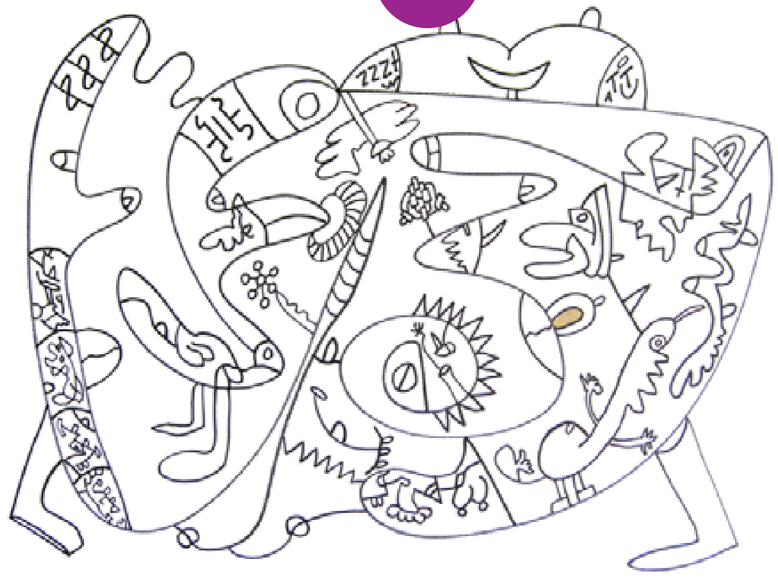

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tov, the sponsor of the event. He has done a great deal to merge chess and art, and I asked him if I could exhibit some of my works during the event. Although this was only for the last three days of the match, the opportunity for an artist to have his first exhibit at the Tretyakov Gallery is wonderful and I am very grateful to Andrei for letting it happen.

Since making decisions à la blitz has been the credo in both my business dealings and in my life, I have developed an art movement that corresponds to this approach. I called it *Maximatism*. Below is a short version of what it is and what it is not – a kind of manifesto that is seeing print for the first time.

***Maximatism** is a new art movement, the key to which is to absorb with MAXIMUM speed the impulses and signs received from above (your subconscious) about the forms and colours which should be used for your art creation. It doesn't matter what your hand does, it's only important that the move which your subconscious dictates is depicted on canvas. Move by move, stroke by stroke, you will reach the end – the signature on your art work, which will signify MATE and a successful completion of your creation. Choice of colour, medium, form or object is made during the creative process. Maximatism will be in full force if you throw away fear and are ready to receive guidance from your subconscious.*

The difference between maximatism and other directions in art is that, as in chess, the right stroke (move) may arise on the canvas (board) by complete surprise, as if an intuitive player finally finds the most amazing combination simply by believing that it is there. Stroke by stroke, creating strange forms, with surprising colours, a maximatist, just like a chess player, will create a work of art, simply by making strong moves. In the end, combinations will start finding themselves, and the artist will simply be amazed at how well he played.

In general, I have become convinced that to be successful at anything, confidence and lack of fear of failure is paramount. With this in mind, we can recall the great Mikhail Tal, who led his pieces to grandiose victories unshaken by their diminishing numbers; Napoleon, who won numerous battles while being outnumbered; and Salvador Dali, who created a one-man freak show that propelled him to greatness.

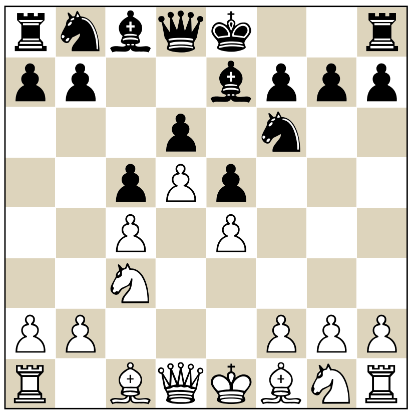
I welcome maximatists to join me in my quest to bring out the best this life has to offer.

As a further introduction for the readers of New In Chess I would like to present an old game of mine played in the spirit of maximatism, with annotations both to the game and an artwork in progress.

Incidentally, I am in the process of posting all my art and various design items on my site *maximatism.com*. Everyone is welcome!

I begin my artwork, just like any chess game, with opening moves. Here my hand started making random wavy motions, which I ended up filling up into some sort of figures resembling God knows what.

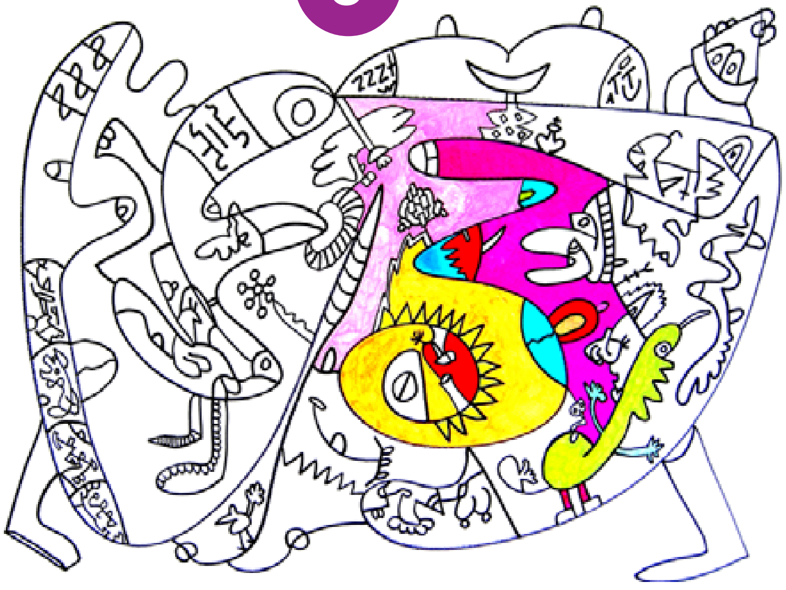
In the chess game which I played with white against Carlos Silva Sanchez at the Dubai Olympiad 1986, the moves **1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5 4.♘c3 d6 5.e4 ♗e7**



corresponded to my artistic opening position.

①

3



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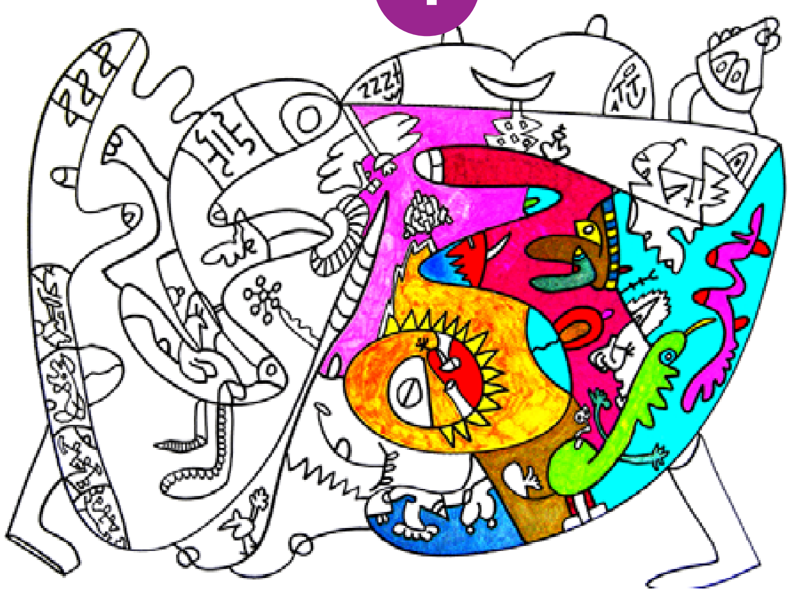
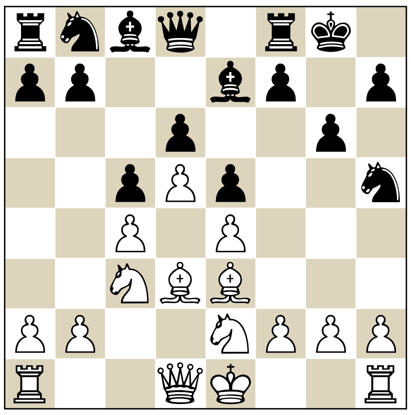


At this point in the game, I opted for a very simple development plan. My idea is to develop pieces as quickly as possible, allowing Black to exchange the dark-squared bishops, but building up an attack on the kingside. **6.♗d3 0-0 7.♘ge2 ♘h5 8.♗e3 g6?!**

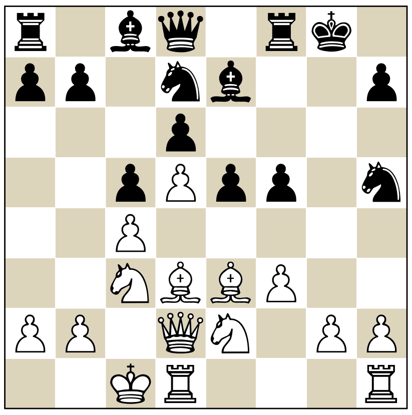


My opponent decides to keep the bishops on, which I think is not ideal. White's dark-squared bishop is more active than its colleague, and Black will now need to be really inventive to muster serious counterplay. Since I had expected 8...♗g5 9.♕d2 ♗xe3 10.♕xe3, which occurred in numerous of my games even previous to 1986(!), I needed to reassess the position.

In the painting, I decided to add a few developmental motifs, filling up space with more strange figures, and taking out a piece of dirt which flew in through the window with gold. I added a weird-looking animal in the bottom right-hand corner, a whole assembly of random pieces of design on the left and some circles which with some imagination might look like eyes.

2

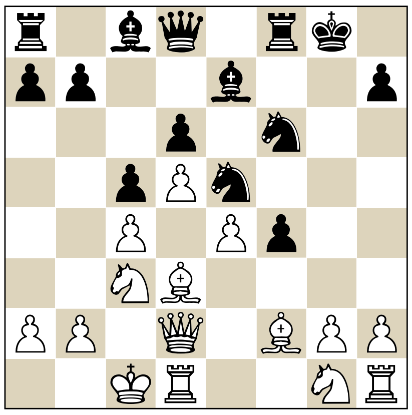
The game continued **9.♕d2 f5 10.exf5 gxf5 11.f3** The other plan is to play 11.f4 e4 12.♗c2, planning an eventual g4 and reserving the decision as to where to castle for later. **11...♘d7 12.0-0-0**



In the painting I added a number of letters, inverse dollar signs, an unidentified mechanism in the centre, wings without a body on the right, some strangeness down in the centre and a variety of other details, continuing to develop the overall feel of the work.

3

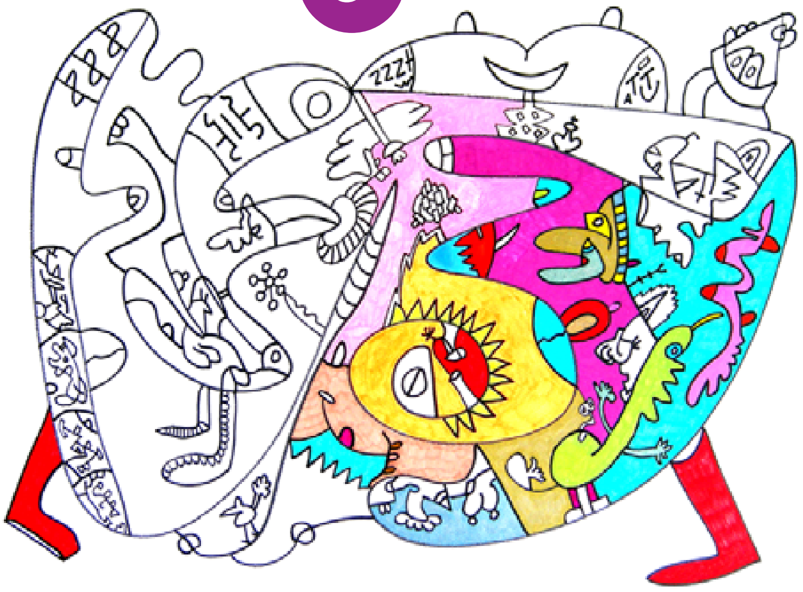
The opening is over and Black decides on a typical middlegame plan, sacrificing a pawn for control of the dark squares. **12...e4 13.fxe4 f4 14.♗f2** Clearly the pawn on f4 is taboo, as Black would end up winning with ♗g5. **14...♘e5 15.♘g1** A typical manoeuvre to unwind my forces. I need to challenge Black's strong pieces while looking to launch an attack. **15...♘f6**



An understandable manoeuvre. Black tries to take out my dark-squared bishop. Obviously I will have to stop this. He could also try 15...♗g4 16.♗e2 ♗xe2 17.♕xe2 ♘f6, but after 18.h3 I would eventually combine to exchange Black's menacing knights, opening up lines on the kingside and gaining an advantage.

In the artwork, the transition to the middlegame signified adding colour to the mix. I started with bright colours in the centre, as central colours would be easier to match up later in the process.

5



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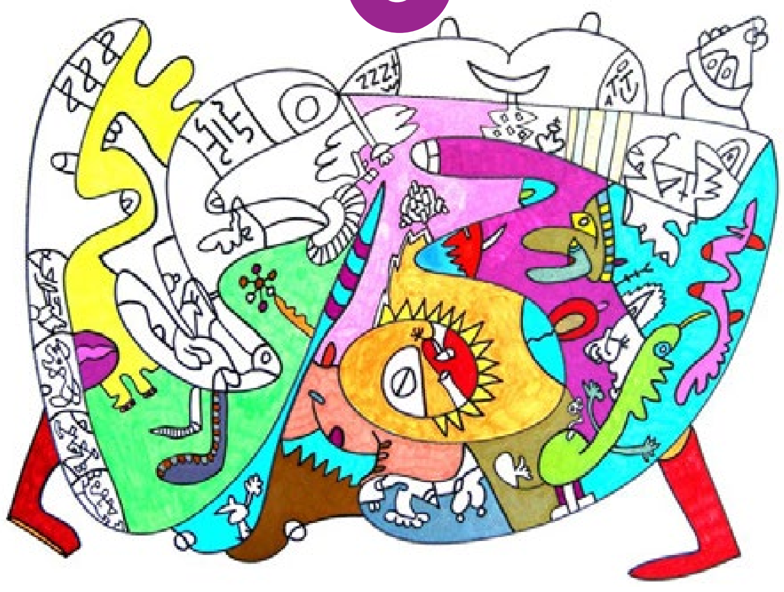
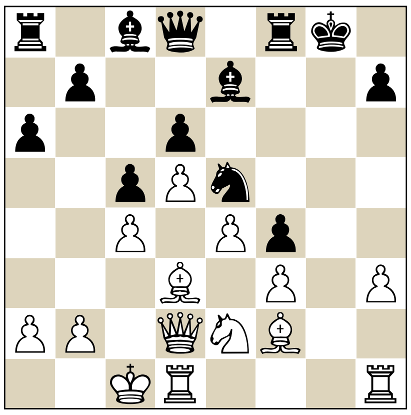


4

16.h3! Stopping Black's knight entry to g4. 16.♘f3 ♘fg4 didn't look clear at all. **16...a6 17.♘f3 ♘fd7 18.♘e2!** A very concrete idea! I am forcing Black to react to my threats on the kingside, before he creates counterplay on the queenside. **18...♘xf3** The computer suggests 18...♘xd3+ 19.♕xd3 b5, but after 20.♖hg1 bxc4 21.♕xc4 ♖b8 22.g3 fxg3 23.♖xg3+ ♔h8 24.♗e1 White is a solid pawn up. **19.gxf3 ♘e5**

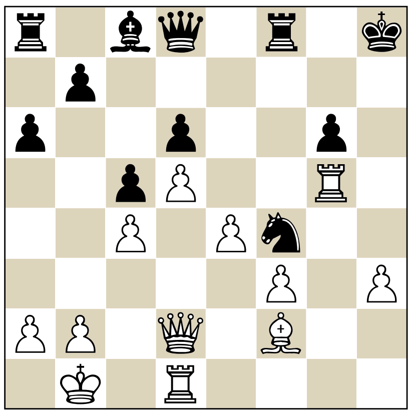


An important position, which had to be calculated in advance, has arisen.

Some blue colours are added to the painting to reflect the upcoming depth of design.

5

20.♖hg1+ ♔h8 21.♘xf4! The obvious idea is to meet 21...♘xf3 with 22.♘g6+, winning on the spot. **21...♗g5 22.♘g6+! hxg6 23.♖xg5!** 23.♕xg5 would fail miserably to 23...♕xg5+ 24.♖xg5 ♖xf3. **23...♘xd3+** Testing my idea. The mundane 23...♘xf3 24.♕c3+ ♔h7 25.♖g3 would reveal that Black is down a pawn with a bad position. **24.♔b1** Simple and strong! Black's queenside pieces are not participating in the battle, while I am hunting down his king. **24...♘f4**

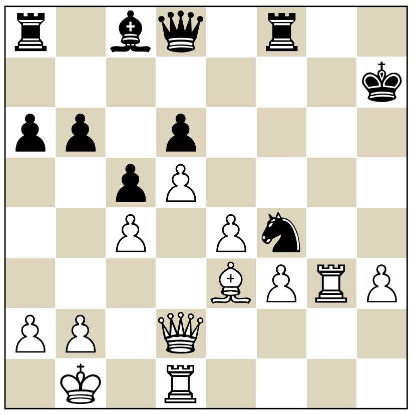


This move looks natural. The alternative 24...♘xf2 is crushed with simple development: 25.♖xg6 ♖f7 26.♖dg1, and White's combined threats of ♖h6, followed by ♕c3, and ♕f4 decide.

Meanwhile my painting's got red coloured feet to stand on, and the five numbers in the top right-hand corner happen to be the first five perfect numbers, with the sum of the denominators equal to the number itself.

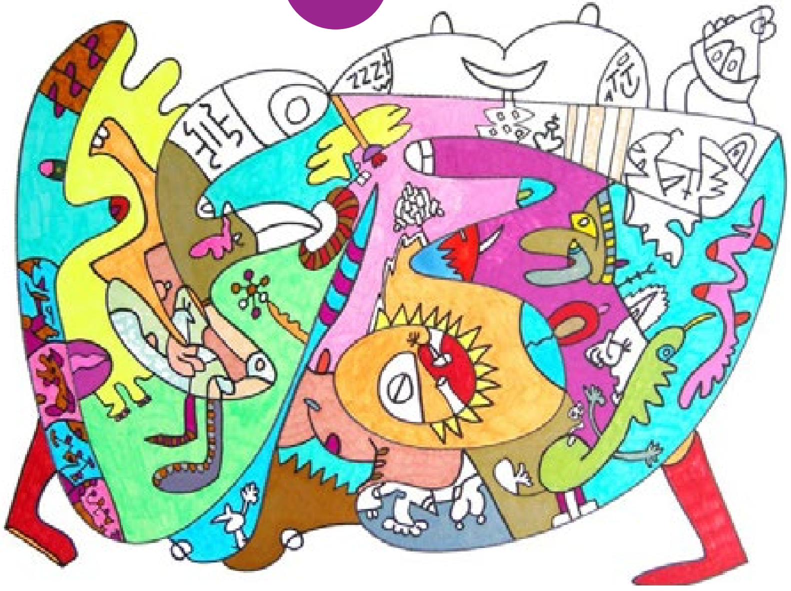
6

25.♖xg6! With the last sturdy defender gone, Black's defences are mowed down fast. **25...♔h7** The only reasonable move. Black's problem is that his bishop and rook simply can't make it to the party. **26.♖g3** I plan to slowly move in for the kill. After ♗e3 and ♖dg1 the threats will be unstoppable. **26...b6 27.♗e3**



The painting is almost complete. The end is in sight. The last major question remaining is which colour best fits the smiling breasts at top centre.

7



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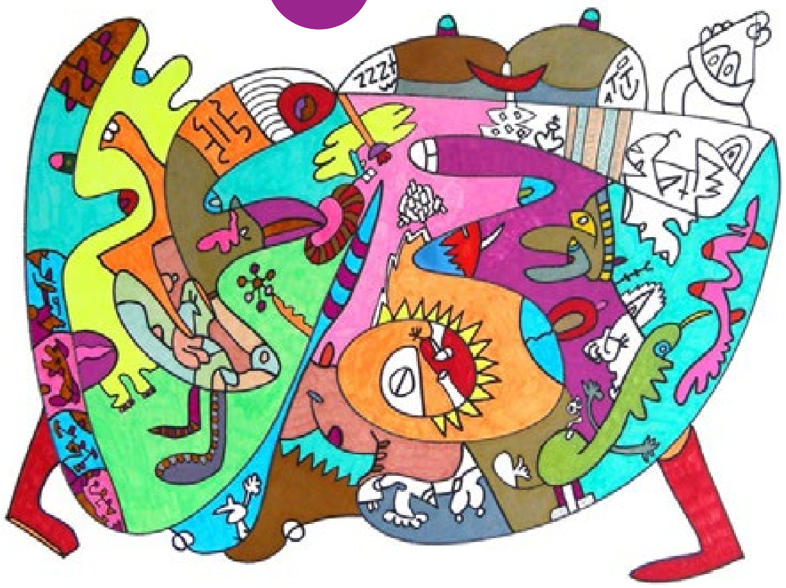
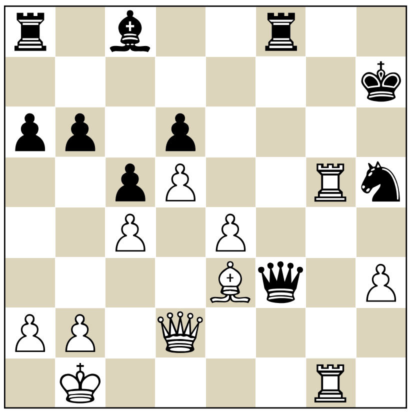


7

27...♕f6 28.♖dg1 ♘h5 The attempt to finally involve a queenside piece in the game with 28...♖a7 would fail after the simple show of strength with 29.♗xf4 ♕xf4 30.♕g2. White's threat is to play ♖g7+, while on 30...♖ff7, 31.♖g8, threatening ♖h8, is a killer. **29.♖g5 ♕xf3**



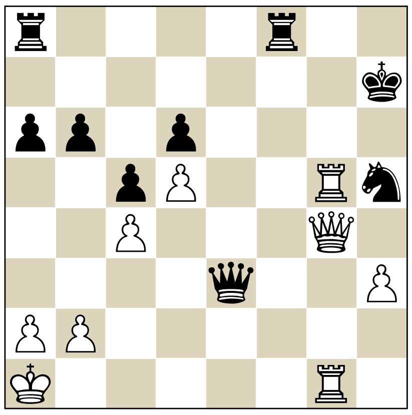
8

As you can see, I decided to use gold and bronze as prize-winning colours for the smiley figure on top. The other components will be easy to choose.

30.♕f2! There are other winning moves, like 30.♕g2 and 30.♕c3, but the opportunity to give up another pawn with check while leaving my queen unprotected was hard to resist. **30...♕xe4+** Black's best chance was 30...♗g4 31.hxg4 ♕xe4+ 32.♕c2, when White simply has a winning endgame. Now it's a slam dunk. **31.♔a1 ♗g4 32.♕h4! ♕xe3 33.♕xg4** 1-0.

I finished up the little details and signed with MDLU, my maximatist signature.

9



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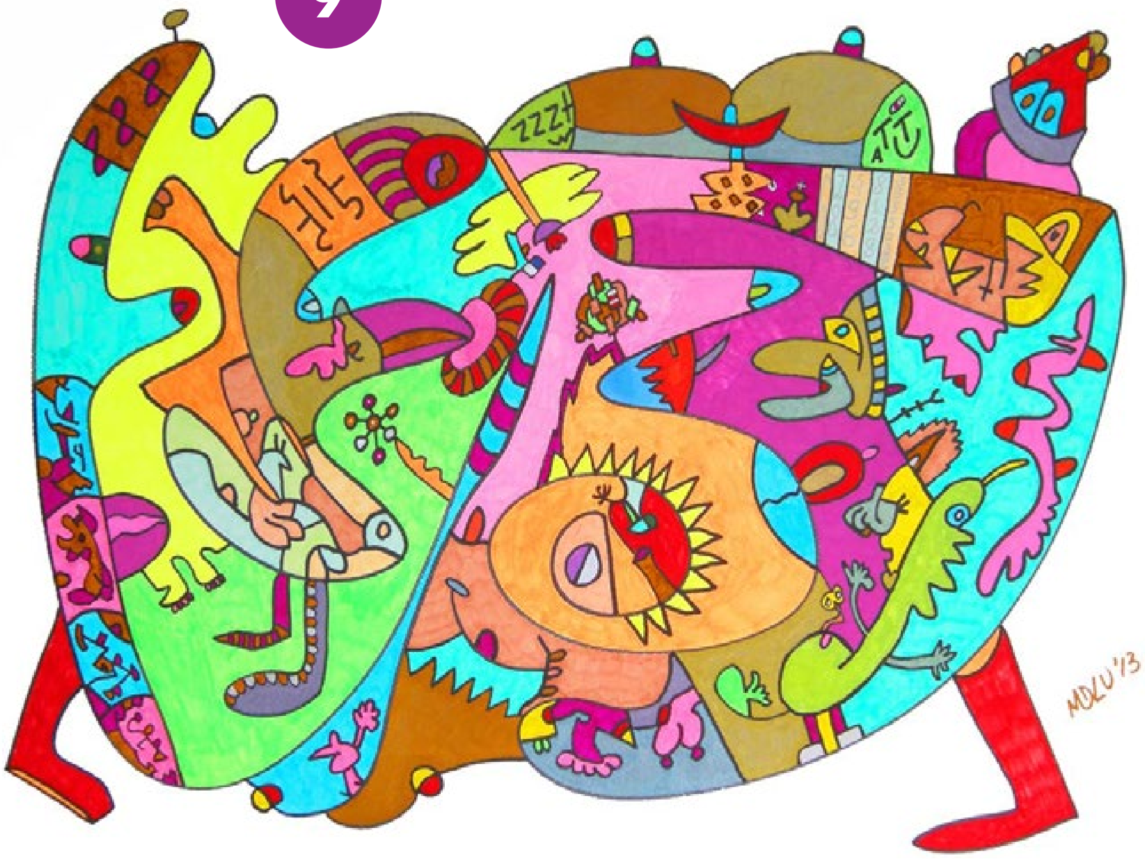

Colossal Success in Rhodes

Novy Bor upsets favourites

With a daunting array of stars on board (Caruana, Topalov, Mamedyarov, Giri, etc.) and boasting an average rating of 2753(!), little could go wrong for the super-squad of SOCAR. And if the clear favourites were to stumble, surely one of the Russian giants would claim the European Club Cup in Rhodes. Or so it seemed. Taking full advantage of the pairing system, fifth seed Novy Bor from the Czech Republic caused a sensation. Novy Bor's first board **David Navara** tells the tale.

I remember very well when it was suggested to me that one day I should write an article for New In Chess. It was during the closing ceremony of the 2012 Reykjavik Open, where I said in jest to the editor that Bobby Fischer might be alive and well and living in Israel, hiding from obtrusive journalists. After some time had elapsed, I proposed to write an article on my lost match, earlier this year in Prague, versus Hou Yifan (Hou Yifan won an Armageddon game after four classical games – all draws – and two blitz games – one win each – had produced no result – ed.), but my offer was politely declined and perhaps rightly so. After all, both Hou Yifan's match victories and my defeats are pretty common events.

But all of a sudden, another opportunity appeared, and this time the occasion is genuinely unique: in Rhodes, the Czech team of Novy Bor surprisingly won the European Club Cup ahead of the stellar Azeri team of SOCAR and several Russian top clubs.

If you have got through my initial sentences, I can reassure you that I am not going to continue in this egocentric vein. I am, after all, a relative newcomer in Novy Bor and my place in the club's history is rather humble.

The city of Novy Bor (meaning 'new pine-forest') lies in northern Bohemia close to the border with Germany and has around 12,000 inhabitants. It is renowned for its glass industry. The local chess club was founded in 2002

(Left) The team of Novy Bor proudly shows the European Club Cup: Radek Wojtaszek, Zbynek Hracek, Mateusz Bartel, Krishnan Sasikiran, David Navara, Viktor Laznicka, (front row) captain Peter 'Guardiola' Boleslav and Robert Cvek.

And this (right) is how the odds-on favourites of SOCAR endured the prize-giving. Sitting in first row Veselin Topalov, Fabiano Caruana and Wang Hao fail to hide their disappointment. Behind them Gata Kamsky, Eltaj Safarli and Teimour Radjabov seem to be in a similar mood.

and has gradually worked its way up from the lowest leagues to the Czech Extraleague. Although the club has always been very ambitious and has attracted many strong players, the journey to the top was not an easy one. The team faced big problems in their attempt to promote from the first division to the Extraleague and succeeded only because their main rival unexpectedly stumbled in the last round. Next, in their Extraleague debut, Novy Bor lost 1½-6½ to the team of Pardubice, which subsequently claimed the title. Such a painful loss can cost you not only your self-confidence, but also sponsorship. Fortunately, this was not the case. The club leadership persevered and certainly has no regrets. Novy Bor first claimed the Czech title in 2008 and then repeated this feat four times between 2010 and 2013. I cannot resist mentioning the 2008/2009 season, when Novy Bor was overcome by the team of Mahrla Praha. The decisive match was played in the ultimate round and the Prague team won 4½-3½, with only one draw. Playing for Prague, I lost to Viktor Laznicka. It is remarkable that GM Tukmakov, SOCAR's current captain, also played alongside me. This match had a lot in common with the decisive encounter of the European Club Cup of 2013.

We are all grateful to the club president Roman Muzik and the sponsors, without whom such an achievement would not have been possible. Mr. Muzik works as an agent for a big firm, dealing with many other companies, which helps him to find numerous sponsors for the club. Our expenses at this event were covered by the company G-Team. As the Czech name 'Novoborsky' (the adjective derived from 'Novy Bor') is fairly incomprehensible outside Slav countries, the club adopted the name G-Team Novy Bor for the European Club Cup.

The team has been gradually strengthening its line-up. Nowadays, its most prominent members are grandmasters Nikita Vitiugov, Alexey Shirov, Radoslaw Wojtaszek, Pentala Harikrishna, Viktor Laznicka, Krishnan Sasikiran and me.

Novy Bor first participated in the European Club Cup in 2007, but only broke through in Rogaska Slatina 2011, when the team surprisingly won the bronze medal. That year Mateusz Bartel was the main hero, as he scored a stunning 6½/7 on Board 3, beating GMs Inarkiev and Predojevic along the way.

In 2012 the club saw further enforcements, when GM Sasikiran and I joined the team. Still, in Eilat we only finished 10th, losing three matches against top teams by a minimal margin. I was joking that my presence had an adverse effect. Now I am very glad to see that this was not the case.

The club runs the most popular Czech chess website. In case you are interested, please have a look at www.nss.cz. It will provide you with a lot of information and a good reason to learn Czech. In case you suffer from low blood pressure, it may be helpful to view the readers' comments as well.

The club also organizes the Novy Bor Chess Corrida, matches where top class and top glass come together. The playing venue is a restaurant with a glass furnace. Usually customers come there to digest a good meal and watch the glassmakers, but one week each year they can watch a chess match instead. Viktor Laznicka won the first match against me in 2011 with a score of 4½-1½ and then lost to GMs Shirov and Topalov 2-4 in the next two years. I occasionally acted as a commentator there, thus improving on my poor performance in the initial match.

Perhaps it is time to return to the European Club Cup 2013, as it is worth it! This year's edition was once again impressive, with many strong teams. The clear favourite was the Azeri juggernaut of SOCAR, but several Russian top clubs and some of the best Western teams also participated. The Czech team of Novy Bor was ranked fifth. Our players lost eight games throughout the event, compared to three losses by the players of Malachite and SOCAR. Nevertheless, Novy Bor claimed the title and I would like to describe our team's road to victory.

Our team included several players of approximately equal strength. I played on first board owing to my massive advantage in PR (meaning public relations, not personal rating). Next there were grandmasters Radoslaw (or Radek) Wojtaszek, Viktor Laznicka and Krishnan Sasikiran. All of them scored heavily. But I should not reveal everything in advance. Our line-up also included GMs Hracek, Bartel and Cvek, who are fairly strong players as well. The captain was Petr Boleslav, dubbed Guardiola by Mateusz Bartel. Petr indeed resembles the famous football trainer. In general, Mateusz's quips helped to improve the mood in our team. His most common targets were Radek, Petr Boleslav and me, but all of us were ready to retort.

This time we had to do without GMs Vitiugov and Shirov, who were playing for St Petersburg and Malachite respectively. This is a typical problem for many other clubs as well, as numerous professionals qualify with various teams from multiple leagues. After the last round grandmaster Shirov remarked that this was the second time that he won a silver medal with one of his teams, whereas gold was won by one of his other teams.

We started the tournament by winning the initial two matches 4½-1½. Losses by Mateusz and me were compensated for by wins of the others. In the third round we beat the strong team of Rostov, when both Mateusz and I made up for our previous losses. Radek Wojtaszek scored a further win, sealing our overall victory of 4-2.

Then, in Round 4, we faced the powerful team of Malachite, which had won all 18 games in the initial three rounds! The match was very tense. I confirmed my class and once again lost to GM Grischuk. I was worse during most of the game. When I got an opportunity to steer the game to a draw, I had no wish to do so, whereas when I wanted to make a draw after all, there was no longer an easy way. This imbalance between wishes and opportunities may be a more general phenomenon, at least in my case.

Mateusz compensated for my loss by beating Alexander Riazantsev, but

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then GM Shirov won against GM Sasikiran. Radek pushed hard, but Sergey Karjakin proved to be solid enough. The situation looked critical for us, as we were losing 2-3. The last game was played between GM Morozevich and Viktor Laznicka. Viktor had the upper hand in a crazy game, but the position remained complicated and mistakes inevitably occurred. In the end, the Russian GM made the last one, which enabled Viktor to level the score.

'I played on first board owing to my massive advantage in PR (meaning public relations, not personal rating).'

I have already mentioned that GM Shirov is also a member of the Novy Bor Chess Club. However, a true professional has to be able to change social roles rather quickly and the Latvian GM was fully aware of which team he was playing for in Rhodes. I am not going to criticize him, as I have recently played in the Czech Extraleague against Novy Bor, too. And my opponent was none other than GM Shirov himself! If you wonder how I could play against my own club, I should mention that in the Czech Republic players can participate in two or three different leagues during a season. I therefore qualified for the European Club Cup by playing for the second team of Novy Bor in the 1st division.

In Round 5 we overcame the Belgian team of Eynatten, which was a relatively acceptable opponent given the circumstances. In general, the pairing system was rather strange. If a team received an opponent with a lower number of match points, it picked up the last one from the next group, not the first one! This time we profited from this rule, but I still wonder whether all those innovations have really improved the good old Swiss system. It makes sense to prefer match points over board points, but the price is high. And seven rounds might not be enough for such a big tournament.

In Round 6, the match between SOCAR and Novy Bor took place. It is hard to overestimate the impact of this encounter on the final standings. SOCAR was leading with a perfect score of 10 match points, while we occupied sole second place, just one match point behind. At the beginning, the match looked all right for SOCAR. Mateusz Bartel misplayed the opening and was quickly punished by Anish Giri. However, things became more complicated. Viktor Laznicka achieved a huge advantage against GM Kamsky, while I reached a favourable endgame against Fabiano Caruana. On the other hand, Zbynek Hracek lost an exchange to Wang Hao and was fighting for survival. The game Mamedyarov-Sasikiran steered for a draw after some complications. The turning point came in the game Topalov-Wojtaszek. In a complex position the Bulgarian star erred and enabled Black to develop a decisive attack. Around the same moment, the defences of GMs Caruana and Kamsky collapsed. It all happened in a couple of minutes and we suddenly scored 3½ points. Wang Hao skilfully converted his advantage, but that was poor comfort for the rating favourites, who unexpectedly lost the match.

Mateusz later joked that his early loss had motivated the team, but I am inclined to think that we were more motivated by his spirited victories over GMs Sjugirov and Riazantsev.

Before the last round, we were leading with 11 points ahead of a group of five pursuers with 10 points. We could have faced St Petersburg or Minsk, but fortune favoured us again, as we were paired against the Belarussian team. Their young squad was quite dangerous, but the reigning Russian champions would have been tougher opponents. Meanwhile, SOCAR and St Petersburg were paired against each other and Malachite faced Rostov.

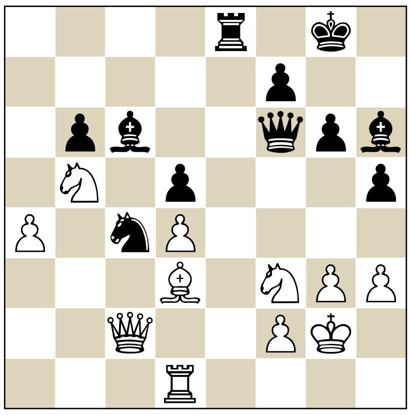
Our final match was everything but smooth, as Mateusz emerged from the opening a pawn down with no compensation. Still, in the end our experience prevailed and after the time-control we were already leading 3½-1½, thus claiming the match and the title. Grandmaster Sasikiran was left with a better position. He kept pushing for a further 100 minutes until he squeezed the coveted point. In chess, too, the foreigners usually have to work harder than the local players. It is remarkable that the last match was the only one in which we did not lose a single game.

We played as a team and everybody contributed to our success, but some players stood out. Radek Wojtaszek played superb chess. Scoring 5/6 on second board, he was the most successful player of the team and achieved the second-best performance in the whole tournament. He duly won a gold medal on Board 2 and proved that he is not just a world-class second, but a very strong grandmaster as well. Radek was the only player of our team to win a board medal.

Viktor Laznicka also played very well and scored 5½/7 with a performance of 2788. Surprisingly, this was still not enough to claim a board medal! However, Viktor won his last four games and greatly contributed to our success.

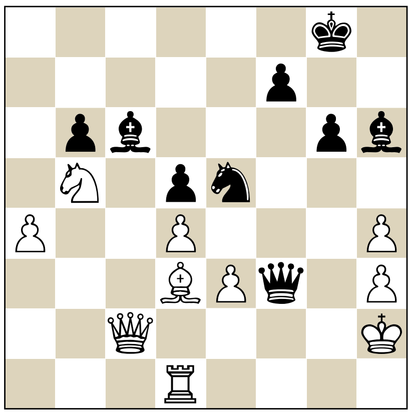
Grandmaster Sasikiran achieved a decent score of 5/7, winning several rating points. I was impressed by his composure in fierce time-troubles.

The following example illustrates this perfectly.



Koch-Sasikiran
position after 35.♖d1

Black has achieved a slightly more pleasant position, but no more. **35...♖e3 36.♘e5?** Around here, both sides were already short of time. But this did not stop the Indian grandmaster from quickly achieving a winning advantage with pointed play: **36...♘xe5! 37.fxe3 ♕f3+ 38.♔h2 h4! 39.gxh4**



39...♗xe3 I also spotted the combination rather quickly, but if I had been pressed by time, that might not have been the case. After **40.♕e2** (40.dxe5 d4 was hopeless) **40...♗f4+ 41.♔g1 ♕xh3** Black achieved a clearly winning position. Then he chose a safe way which enabled his opponent to prolong the fight, but his final victory remained beyond doubt. On move 57, White resigned.

It is remarkable that going by the board points Novy Bor would only have finished 6th-7th. This may be somewhat misleading, but we still remained a stunning 3½ board points behind Malachite. I admit that the pairing system was fairly weird and that it favoured our team this time. Still, our team should not be blamed, as we did not invent it. Not only in Darwin's theory is the winner usually the one who best adapts to the system.

After all, one cannot deny that we did extremely well. Our team overcame SOCAR and Rostov, and drew with Malachite. There is no doubt that luck was on our side this time, but the world of sport would be boring if the favourites won all the time.

It is a pleasure to play for Novy Bor. The wonderful team spirit did a lot to help us achieve this success. I do not know the current anti-doping regulations concerning alcohol, but I do hope that team spirit will not appear on the list of prohibited substances!

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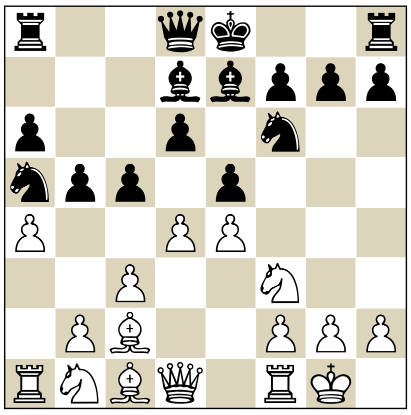
NOTES BY
David Navara

RL 13.5 – C84
David Navara
Fabiano Caruana
Rhodes 2013 (6)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.d3 b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.a4 ♗d7 9.c3 ♘a5

The most common move here is 9...0-0, but Fabiano prefers to plough his own furrow.

10.♗c2 c5 11.d4



11...♕b8

After 11...♕c7 12.axb5 Black would be forced to recapture with the bishop, as 12...axb5? loses a piece to 13.b4.

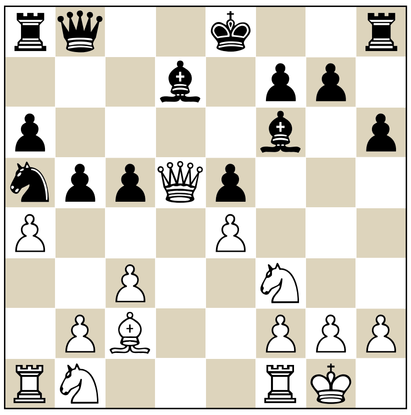
12.♗g5

White prevents Black from castling.

12...h6 13.♗xf6

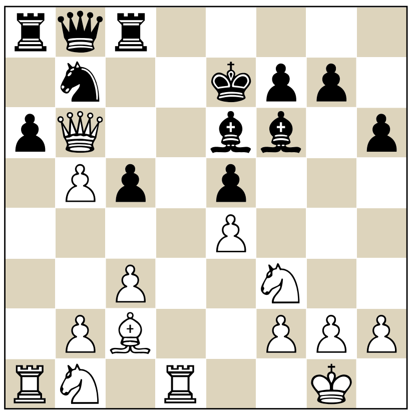
The game Ponomariov-Caruana, FIDE Grand Prix Thessaloniki 2013, saw 13.♗h4 ♗e6 14.♘bd2 0-0, with equality. I assume that after d4-d5 Black would have withdrawn his bishop to d7.

13...♗xf6 14.dxc5 dxc5 15.♕d5



15...♘b7! This was a surprise. During my preparation I had focused on 15...♕c8 16.♘xe5 ♗e6 17.♕d6 b4 18.f4 ♗e7, with compensation for the pawn for Black.

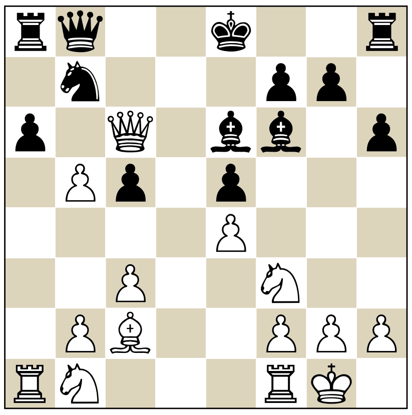
16.axb5 Here I luckily avoided a cunning trap. I rejected 16.♖d1 on account of 16...♕c7 17.axb5 ♗xb5, but after 18.♕a2! White would have the better chances, as 18...♗e2?? fails to 19.♗a4+! ♔f8 20.♖d7, winning. However, Black can improve with 16...♗e6! 17.♕c6+ ♔e7 18.axb5 ♖c8 19.♕b6



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

19...a5!!. The threat of 20...♔f8, followed by 21...♗d8, is very hard to parry. It would have been difficult for me to cope with the shock and start looking for equality. I am fairly sure that this was still Fabiano's preparation.

16...♗e6 17.♕c6+

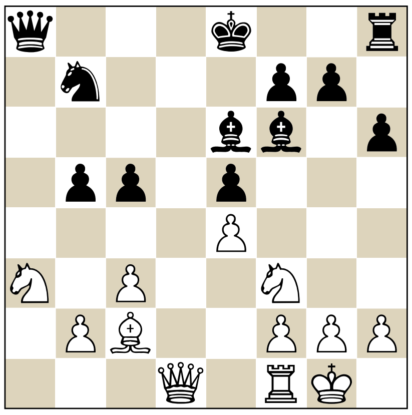


I wanted to save some time, check Black's willingness to play for a win and also boost my self-confidence. Not being much of an optimist, I like seeing that even a top player is ready to repeat moves against me. Perhaps I had better see a psychologist, but repeating moves is simpler and cheaper.

17...♗d7 18.♕d5

Not, of course, 18.♕b6?? ♗d8.

18...♗e6 19.♕d1 axb5 20.♖xa8 ♕xa8 21.♘a3



21...♕a5

Fabiano spent a lot of time and went for a rather strange continuation, which allowed me to play for a win without any risk.

Black could have reached comfortable equality by means of 21...b4 22.♘b5 ♕d8, but there were many other ways as well.

22.♘xb5 ♗c4?!

Houdini claims that 22...0-0 leads to equality, whereas I would prefer White. Those two statements do not contradict each other.

23.♘d6+ ♘xd6 24.♕xd6 ♗xf1 25.♔xf1 ♕b5+

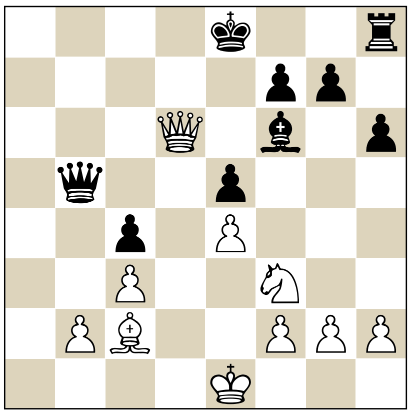
After 25...♕a1+?! 26.♘e1! Black runs out of good moves, whereas White's knight can occasionally re-enter the play through d3.

26.♔e1

Not having seen the movie *Return of the King*, I was afraid of some problems with the back rank in the event of 26.♔g1 ♗e7 27.♕xe5 ♕xb2. However, my Houdini suggests 28.♗d3!, with an edge for White (after 28.♗a4+? ♔f8 the check on a1 would be imminent).

26...c4

Perhaps Black should have tried 26...h5!?, thereby activating his rook, which can go to h6. White's position still looks better after 27.♘d2 ♖h6 28.♗b3, but it might have been the lesser evil.



27.g3!

The straightforward continuation 27.♕a3 ♕b7 28.♘d2 did not look convincing enough to me. In lines like 28...♗e7 29.♕a4+ ♔f8 30.♘xc4 g6 Black can consolidate his position.

As a consequence I switched my attention to 27.h4, trying to restrict Black's bishop and prepare ♘f3-d2 without allowing ...♗f6-g5. But then Black would get counterplay due to the hanging h4-pawn after 27...♗e7.

My move not only prevents this, but also creates a shelter for the white king on g2. I also exploited the fact that Black had run out of useful moves.

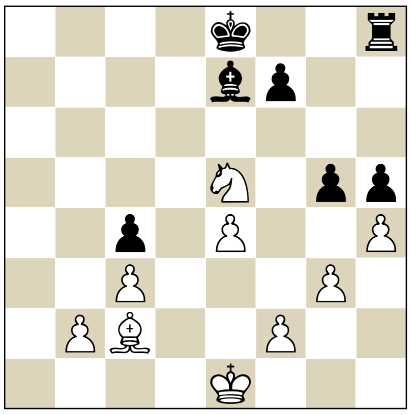
27...h5 28.h4 ♗e7

The alternative 28...♖h6?! 29.♕a3! ♕b7 30.♗a4+ ♔d8 31.♕f8+ ♔c7 32.♕xf7+ was even worse.

The most accurate reaction to 28...♕d7 would be 29.♕c5! ♕e7 30.♗a4+ ♔f8 31.♕c8+! ♕d8 32.♕xc4 g6 33.b4, with an edge, but the intended move 29.♕b4 was not bad either.

29.♕xe5 ♕xe5 30.♘xe5 g5

It is funny that Black can still castle. My next move was not aimed at preventing it; I just wanted to improve the position of my bishop.



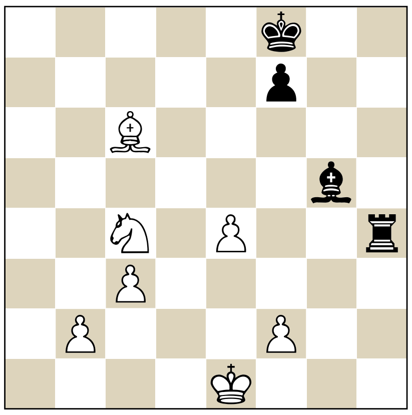
31.♗a4+?! The bishop switch to d5 is artificial and costs a lot of time. Now I would prefer 31.hxg5 ♗xg5 32.♘xc4, but the position seems unlikely to reappear in my practice.

31...♔f8 32.hxg5 ♗xg5 33.♗c6 h4 34.gxh4 ♖xh4 35.♘xc4

I intended to put the bishop on d5, knight on d3 and then advance my queenside pawns.

> 'Now I would prefer 31.hxg5 ♗xg5 32.♘xc4, but the position seems unlikely to reappear in my practice.'

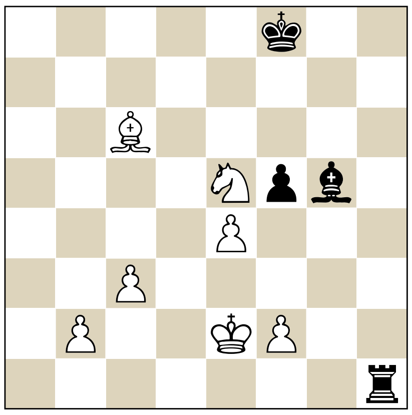
Alas, 35.♗d5 ♖h1+ 36.♔e2 ♖c1 37.♘xf7 ♖c2+ 38.♔d1 ♖c1+ gives Black sufficient counterplay.



35...f5?!

After 35...♖h1+ 36.♔e2 ♖c1! White would face serious problems with his piece co-ordination, as the vulnerable pawns b2 and f2 require a lot of attention. Black should then hold the position without too many problems.

36.♘e5 ♖h1+ 37.♔e2

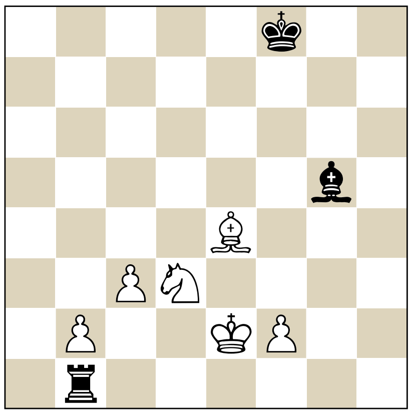


37...♖b1

In time-trouble Black avoids a trap: 37...♖c1?! 38.f4!.

38.♘d3 fxe4 39.♗xe4

During the game I believed that the endgame should be an easy technical win, but in retrospect I find this far too optimistic. White has to advance his pawns very carefully in order to avoid a blockade. Black can also often save the day by giving up the exchange for a pawn. In any case, the win requires a lot of patience, which is certainly not my forte.



39...♔e7 40.f4

I wanted to support the queenside pawns with my king.

It was also possible to play 40.b4, with the idea of 40...♗f6 41.♔d2! (avoiding 41.c4?! ♗c3 42.b5 ♗d4 with an undesirable blockade).

40...♗h6

The pressure against f4 prevents White from moving his king to c2.

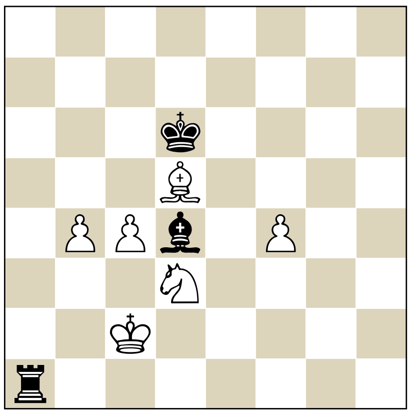
41.b4 ♗g7 42.♔d2 I am unable to say whether White is able to achieve progress after 42.c4 ♗c3 43.b5 ♗d4 44.♘e5 ♖b2+ 45.♔d3 ♗c5.

42...♖a1 43.♗d5 ♔d6 44.c4 ♗d4 45.♔c2

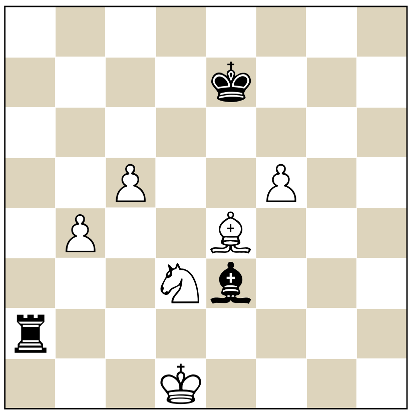
NEW IN CHESS

David Navara: ‘Not being much of an optimist, I like seeing that even a top player is ready to repeat moves against me. Perhaps I had better see a psychologist, but repeating moves is simpler and cheaper.’

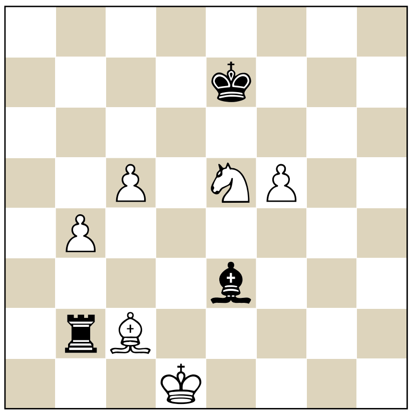
Also after 45.♔e2 ♖b1 46.♔f3 ♗c3 47.b5 ♗d4 White would face big problems breaking the blockade.



45...♖a3! Black prevents 46.♔b3 and tries to harass White’s king.
46.f5 ♖c3+ 47.♔d2 ♖a3!
Fabiano defended well at this stage of the game.
48.♗e4
I wonder why I rejected 48.♔e2, preparing the c4-c5(+) advance. Anyway, Black seems to hold after 48...♗c3 49.♗e6 ♖a2+ 50.♔e3 ♖h2.
48...♖a2+ 49.♔d1
I was not happy to retreat to the back rank.
49...♗e3
Black had other options as well, but there is nothing wrong with his move.
50.c5+ ♔e7



51.♘e5!
One should not hurry when playing the endgame. It is also advisable to develop maximum activity with the remaining pieces. I quite like forcing moves, but forking might be even better!
I had to restrain myself from playing 51.b5?!. The details were not clear to me, but I did not want to lose my advanced pawns. In addition, I correctly assumed that the opposite-coloured bishop endgame with the pawns on b7 and f5 would be drawn, as White would be unable to break through. After 51...♖a5! Black can make a draw in several ways, he only has to reply to 52.♗c6 (52.♔e2 ♗xc5!? 53.♘xc5 ♖xb5 is an easy draw) with 52...♖a2!.
51...♖b2? Being short of time, the Italian grandmaster erred. Black should have given check on d2 first. Now I managed to restrict Black’s rook. The computer says that 51...♖d2+! 52.♔e1 ♖b2 leads to a draw, as White cannot win after 53.f6+ (no better is 53.c6 ♗b6) 53...♔xf6 54.♘g4+ ♔g5! 55.♘xe3 ♔f4 56.♘c4 ♖xb4 57.♘d6 ♔e5.
52.♗c2! White’s knight is ready to give a fork on c4, c6, g4 or g6, depending on Black’s answer. Apart from that, it can return to d3 and clear the way for the b-pawn. Last but not least, White’s king might re-enter the play in some variations.



52...♗g5
The bishop avoids the imminent forks on c4 and g4, but now Black’s king will be unable to go to the d-file because of the check on f7.
Black’s position was already beyond saving. The most stubborn continuation 52...♖a2 would have allowed 53.f6+! ♔e6 54.♗b3+! ♔xe5 55.♗xa2 ♔xf6 56.♔e2, with a transition to a winning endgame. White’s king just marches to c4 and then the pawn advances to b6.
53.c6 ♖a2 Or 53...♖xb4 54.c7 ♖d4+ 55.♔e1, winning.
54.b5 ♗e3 55.f6+ ♔d8 56.f7 ♗c5 57.b6 ♖a1+ 58.♔e2 ♖a2 59.♔d3 ♖b2 60.♘c4 ♖b5 61.♗d1
And Black resigned.

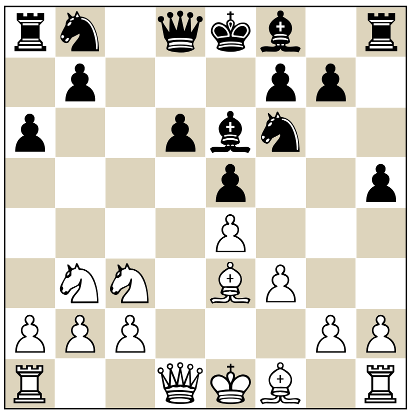
NOTES BY

Radoslaw Wojtaszek

SI 14.8 – B90
Veselin Topalov
Radoslaw Wojtaszek
Rhodes 2013 (6)

Before this match, we were one match point behind our opponents. We felt no pressure at all. These days, SOCAR is like the Real Madrid of chess. They have only star players, so we were expected to lose. We were even joking that David Navara, our highest-rated player, would be their second reserve player. Anyway, I was looking forward to this game, as it's always nice to play such a strong rival.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗e3 e5 7.♘b3 ♗e6 8.f3 h5



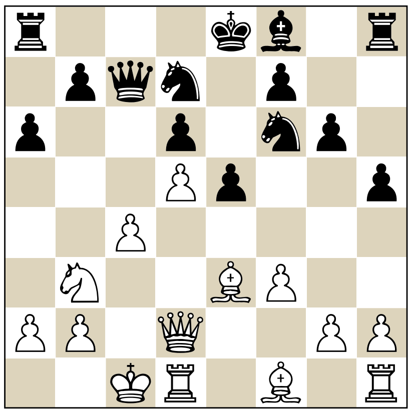
I hesitated a little before playing this move because I knew that my opponent is one of the biggest experts in this line from Black's point of view. On the other hand, I was too curious and decided to see what he had prepared.

9.♘d5 ♗xd5 10.exd5 ♘bd7 11.♕d2 ♕c7

Last year I played 11...g6 against Peter Leko, but here I had a different idea in mind. That game went 12.♗e2 ♗g7 13.0-0 0-0 14.♘a5 ♖b8 15.c4 e4, with an unclear position.

12.c4 g6 13.0-0-0!? Quite an interesting novelty. White wants to hide his king on the queenside.

13.♗e2, followed by 0-0, would be normal, but here Black can try 13...a5!?, which was played by Leinier Dominguez against Fabiano Caruana. Black's idea is to exchange queens: 14.♖d1 a4 15.♘a1 ♕a5 16.♕xa5 ♖xa5, and I think Black has a very decent position.



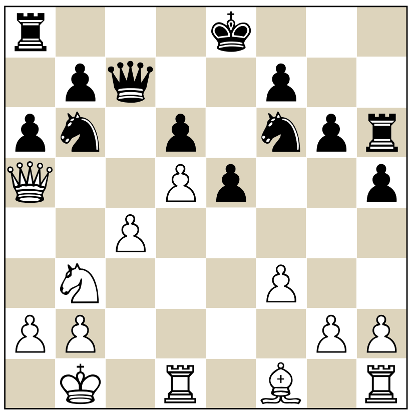
13...♘b6! I think this is the best reaction, as it forces the exchange of the dark-squared bishops.

13...♗g7 would be normal, but I did not like the position after 14.♔b1 0-0 15.♗e2, as I did not really see how I could proceed.

14.♕a5 ♗h6

A typical idea in this line. Black will castle in an unusual way with ♔f8-g7.

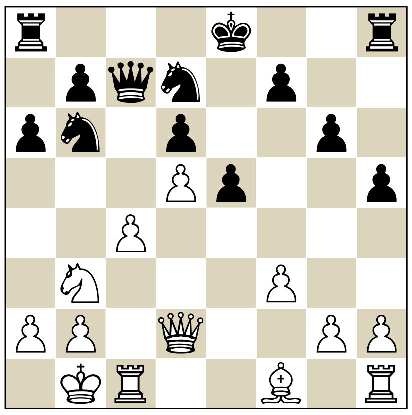
15.♗xh6 ♖xh6 16.♔b1



16...♘fd7 During the game I also considered 16...0-0-0, but it looked too bizarre, so I decided to stick to a more normal plan. After 16...0-0-0 play could continue 17.♖c1 ♔b8 18.♗d3 (the computers also suggest 18.c5!? ♘bxd5 19.♕a4, and Black might also be in trouble here) 18...♖hh8 19.♕d2 h4 20.♖he1, with the idea of ♗f1 and ♖e3. I didn't like Black's position.

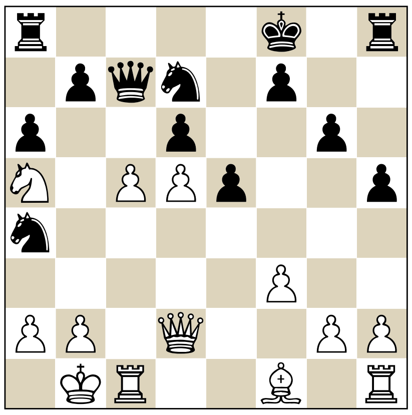
17.♕d2 White has nothing after 17.f4 exf4! 18.♕d2 ♔f8! 19.♕xf4 ♔g7 20.♘d4 ♘e5.

17...♖h8 18.♖c1



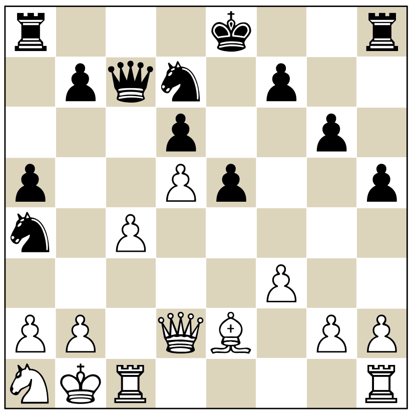
18...♘a4?! I wanted to prepare a blockade with ...a5/...♘c5, but we both missed a strong reply for White. I should have started with 18...♔f8! 19.f4 (19.g3 h4!) 19...exf4 20.♕xf4 ♘a4, with chances for both sides.

19.♗e2?! The right move was 19.♘a5!, and strangely enough, Black is already in trouble. Now 19...♔f8 would be normal but 20.c5! is a very strong sacrifice.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

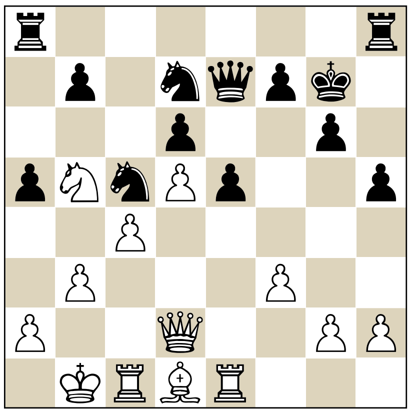
20...dxc5?! (20...♘f6 would be the lesser evil: 21.cxd6 ♕xd6 22.♘xb7 ♕d7 23.♘c5 ♘xc5 24.♖xc5 ♔g7, but it's clear that Black has not enough compensation for the pawn) 21.d6 ♕c8 22.♗c4, with a strong attack for White. **19...a5 20.♘a1!?**



The knight has nothing to do on b3, so White wants to put it on b5. Now it is all about manoeuvring.

20...♔f8 21.♘c2 ♔g7 22.♘a3 ♘f6? This just loses an important tempo. Better was 22...♕d8! 23.♘b5 ♕f6 24.♗d1 ♘ac5, and compared to the game I have an extra tempo.

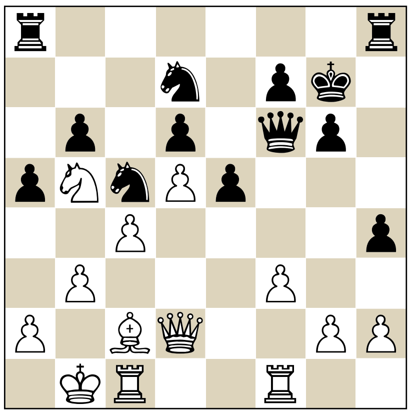
23.♘b5 ♕e7 24.♖he1 ♘c5 25.♗d1 ♘fd7 26.b3



26...♕f6?! Around here I started to drift and spent too much time, as I could not find the right plan.

It was time to play actively with 26...f5!? 27.♗c2 (27.g4?! hxg4 28.fxg4 f4 29.♕xf4?? turns out very well for Black after 29...♘d3!) 27...♘f6 28.g3 b6 29.h3 ♖af8, but even here Black's position already looks unpleasant.

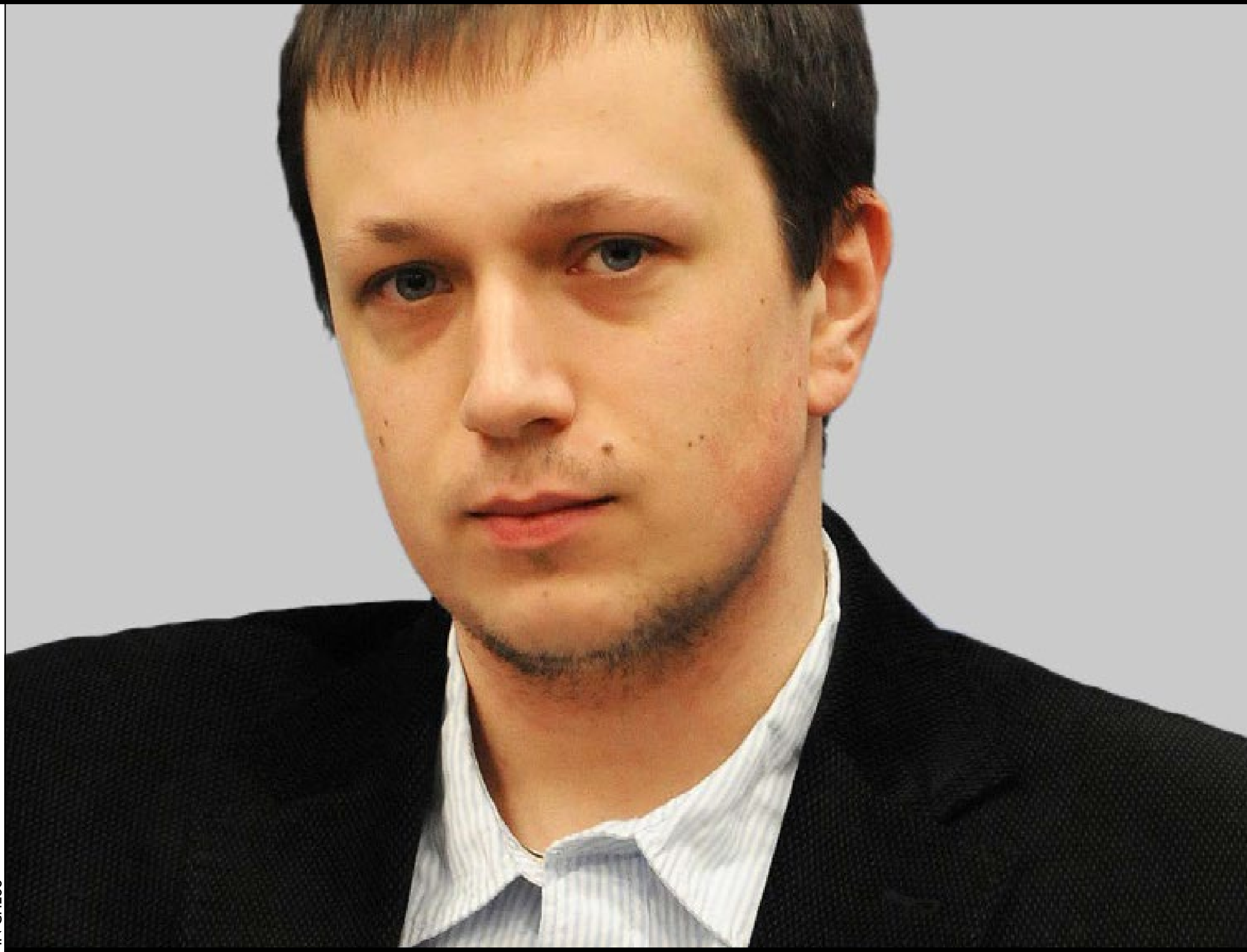
27.♗c2 h4 28.♖f1 b6



29.♖ce1?! It was tempting to improve the rook's position, but it was time for more active play.

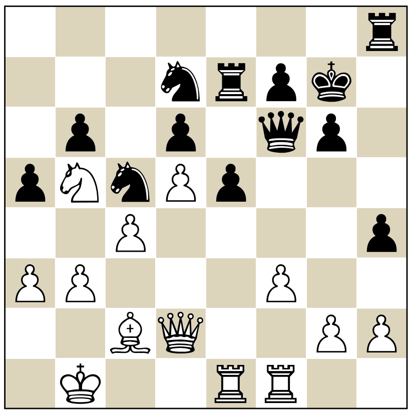
White should have played 29.f4!, and it is difficult to recommend something for Black. For instance 29...e4 (if 29...exf4 30.♖xf4 ♕e7 31.♖cf1 ♘e5 32.♘d4 and 33.♘c6) 30.♖ce1 ♖ae8 31.♖e2, with a clear advantage for White.

29...♖ae8! 30.a3 ♖e7



With a gold medal on Board 2, Radek Wojtaszek proved that he is not only a world-class second, but a very strong grandmaster as well.

NEW IN CHESS



31.♕c3?!

Here 31.g3 hxg3 32.hxg3 ♖ee8 and the opening up of the h-file favour Black, I think.

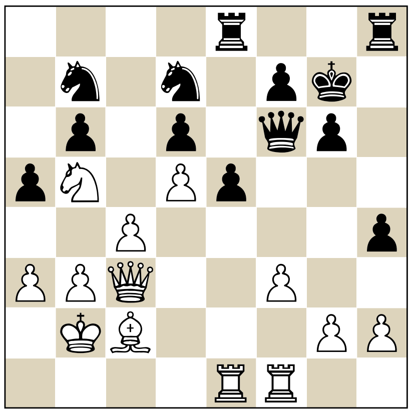
The way to go was 31.b4! ♘b7 32.♘c3 ♖ee8 33.f4 exf4 34.♖xe8 (34.♘e4!? ♖xe4! 35.♖xe4 g5, with some compensation) 34...♖xe8 35.♖xf4 ♖e1+! (35...♕e7 36.♗a4, and Black is paralysed) 36.♔a2 ♕e5 37.♖xh4 ♕e3 38.♕xe3 ♖xe3 39.♔b3, with a clear advantage in the endgame.

31...♖ee8 32.♔b2?!

32.♕d2 was better, as it is difficult to see what Black can do.

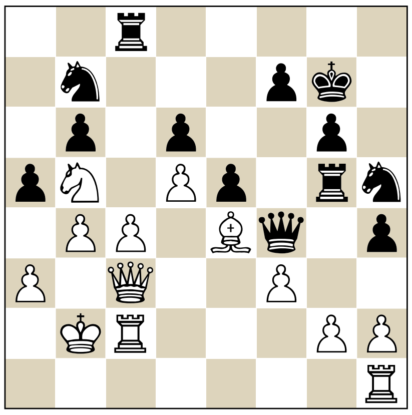
32...♘b7!

I was very happy to find this idea during the game. At least now I will be able to gain some space on the kingside. Moreover, Black has an easy plan to develop some pressure on the kingside.

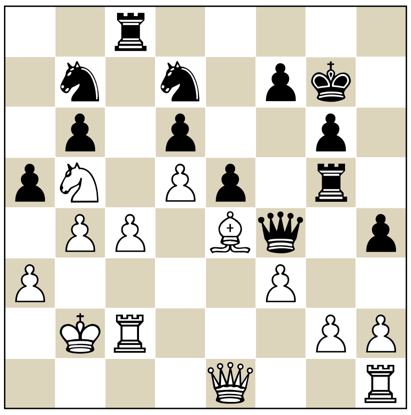


33.b4!? Fixing the knight on b7, but it is always risky to push pawns in front of your king...

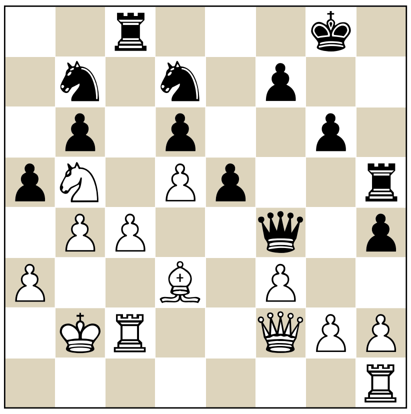
33...♕f4 34.♖h1 ♘f6 35.♗b3 ♖h5!? 36.♖e2 ♖g5 37.♗c2 ♖c8 38.♗e4 ♘h5 39.♖c2



39...♘f6?! Quite a naive decision. I was a bit short of time, so I was hoping to repeat moves once. But of course White does not have to do that.
39...f5! 40.♗d3 ♘f6 was what I should have done, with a very comfortable position.
40.♕e1! ♘d7?! As happens quite often, mistakes come in pairs. It was much better to keep the knight on f6 and play 40...♔g8.

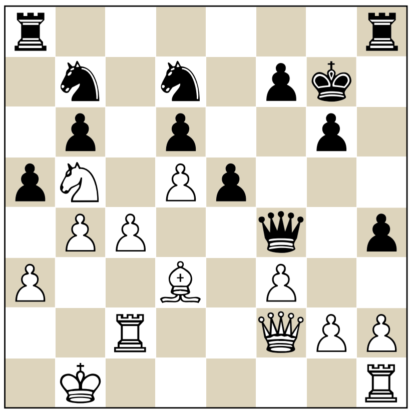


41.♕f2! ♔g8
41...f5 42.♗d3 e4 43.♕d4+! (43.fxe4 ♕xf2 44.♖xf2 fxe4 is good for Black) 43...♔g8 44.♗f1!, and Black is stuck with the pinned queen on f4.
42.♗d3 With the idea of ♘c3-e4.
42...♖h5!?

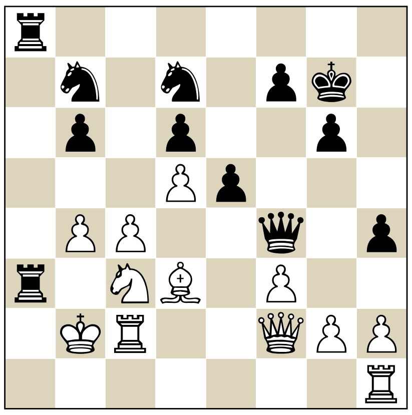


43.♕e2?! White also waits, but there was a chance to free the rook from h1. 43.♘c3 ♕h6 was my idea during the game. But even better was 43.g4! hxg3 (43...♖h8 44.♖g1! – threatening g5 – 44...♕f6 45.g5 ♕g7 46.♖c3, with a white edge) 44.hxg3 ♕h6 45.♖xh5 ♕xh5 and maybe White is a little bit better, but I thought I had some counter-chances as well.
43...♔g7
This move gives Black counterchances.

44.♔b1 ♖hh8
Here I decided to change my plan and try to exploit the fact that White is expanded on the queenside.
45.♕f2 ♖a8!?



46.♘c3?? After manoeuvring for a long time, White finally makes a decisive blunder.
It was too late to try to repeat moves with 46.♘c7? because of 46...axb4 47.♘xa8 b3! 48.♖b2 ♖xa8 49.♖xb3 ♘bc5 50.♖c3 ♕d4 51.♕c2 ♘a4, and Black is on top.
But 46.♖b2! was the way to keep equality: 46...axb4 47.axb4 ♖a4 48.♔c2! ♖ha8 49.g3 ♕f6, with an unclear position with chances for both sides.
46...axb4 47.axb4 ♖a3 48.♔b2 ♖ha8 White is lost. There is no defence against the piece sacrifice and ...♕d4.

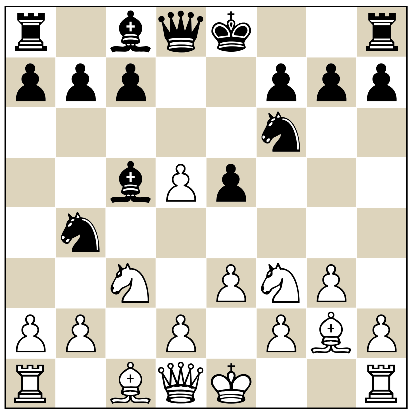


49.♖d2 ♘bc5! 50.bxc5 ♘xc5 51.♗e4 ♖b3+ 52.♔c2 ♖aa3
And my opponent resigned.
Later on we were also able to win on Boards 1 and 3, which yielded us a sensational win against SOCAR. Thanks to this result we could celebrate winning the European Club Cup the next day!

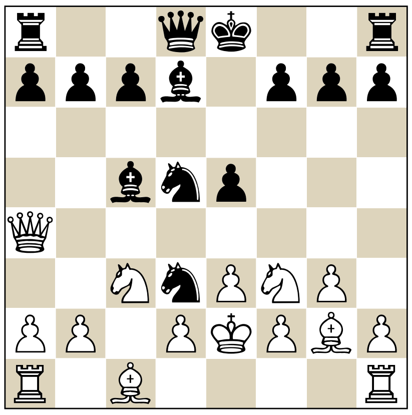
NOTES BY
Viktor Laznicka

EO 20.8 – A25
Alexander Morozevich
Viktor Laznicka
Rhodes 2013 (4)

1.g3 e5 2.c4 ♘f6 3.♗g2 ♘c6 4.♘c3 ♗c5 5.e3 d5
The most principled continuation.
6.cxd5
6.♘xd5 ♘xd5 7.cxd5 ♘b4 8.d3 ♘xd5 9.♘f3 ♕e7 was played recently, with a more positional battle.
6...♘b4 7.♘f3
Again the most challenging move.
7.d4 exd4 8.exd4 ♗e7 (8...♗xd4 is a bad idea because of 9.♕a4+) leads to equality.



7...♘d3+ 8.♔e2 ♘xd5
8...♗f5 9.♕a4+ was played earlier, but it is not advisable.
9.♕a4+ ♗d7
9...c6 was a quieter move. Black should equalize after 10.♘xd5 ♕xd5 11.♘e1 ♘xc1+ 12.♖xc1 ♕d6 13.♘d3 ♗b6 14.♖xc6 bxc6 15.♕xc6+ ♔e7 16.♕xd6+ ♔xd6 17.♗xa8 f5.

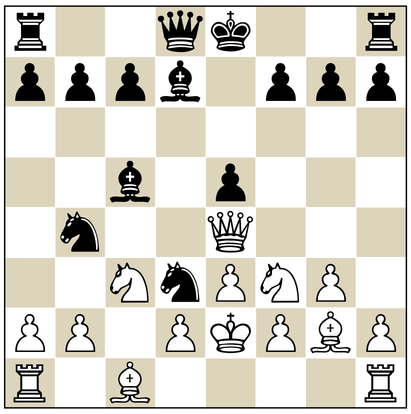


10.♕e4 The position is pretty shaky, one inaccurate move and it might be over. 10.♕c4?, for example, runs into 10...♘5b4 11.♘xe5 ♘xe5 12.♕xc5 ♘bd3 13.♕d5 0-0, and White is in trouble, as witness 14.h3 ♕f6 15.f4 ♗c6, and wins.

10...♘5b4

And now it is clear that we will not see a quiet positional struggle.

10...♘xc3+ would have led to the position White was aiming for: 11.bxc3 ♘xc1+ 12.♖hxc1 f6 13.♕xb7 ♖b8 14.♕e4 ♗a3 15.♖d1, with a white edge.

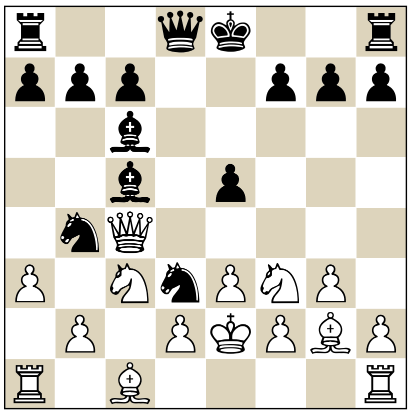


11.a3!?

Even after other moves it looks as if Black is doing fine.

11.♘xe5 f5 12.♕c4 ♘xe5 13.♕xc5 ♘bd3 14.♕d4 ♕e7 15.♘d5 (Black is better after 15.♗xb7 ♖b8 16.♗g2 c5 17.♕h4 ♕d6) 15...♕d8, and now 16.♘c3 ♕e7 could be a slightly boring end for the spectators.

11...♗c6 12.♕c4



12...b5!?

Black has to attack, otherwise he will end up at least a pawn down.

12...e4 was another good possibility: 13.♘e1 (or 13.♘xe4 b5 14.♕c3 ♗xe4 15.axb4 ♗xb4 16.♕xg7 ♖f8, with equal chances) 13...♘xe1 14.axb4 ♘xg2 15.♕xc5 ♕d3+ 16.♔d1 ♗d7 17.♕e5+ ♗e6 18.♕xe4 ♕xe4 19.♘xe4 ♗g4+ 20.♔c2 ♗f3 21.d3 ♘f4 22.♖e1 ♘xd3 23.♘d6+ cxd6 24.♔xd3, with equality.

NEW IN CHESS

Viktor Laznicka on his win against Morozevich: 'Essentially it was just a blitz game with many errors.'

13.♕g4

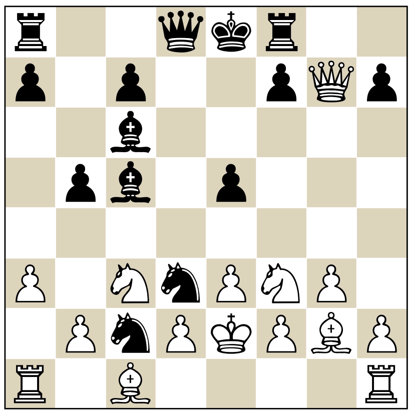
White is only dreaming about a win. This was the last point at which an easy draw could be achieved:

13.♘xb5 e4 14.♘fd4 ♗xd4 15.axb4 (Black is much better after 15.♘xd4 ♗d5 16.♕c3 ♕f6 17.f4 exf3+ 18.♘xf3 ♕a6) 15...♘e5 16.♕xd4 ♗xb5+ 17.♔d1 ♕xd4 18.exd4 ♘d3 19.♗xe4 ♘xf2+ 20.♔c2 ♘xe4 21.♖e1 ♗c6 22.b5 ♗b7 23.d3 0-0-0 24.dxe4 ♖xd4 25.♖xa7, and this should be a draw.

Or 13.♕b3 e4 14.axb4 exf3+ 15.♗xf3 ♗xf3+ 16.♔xf3 ♕f6+ 17.♔e2 0-0-0 18.♘e4 ♕f5 19.bxc5 ♕xe4 20.f3 ♕c6 21.♖xa7 ♕xc5 22.♕a3 ♘xc1+ 23.♖xc1 ♕xc1 24.♖a8+ ♔d7 25.♕d3+ ♔e7 26.♕e4+ ♔d7 27.♕d5+ ♔e7, with a perpetual.

13...♘c2 Around this point we both got short of time. That is why in the remainder of the game the quality of the play is quite bad sometimes.

14.♕xg7 ♖f8

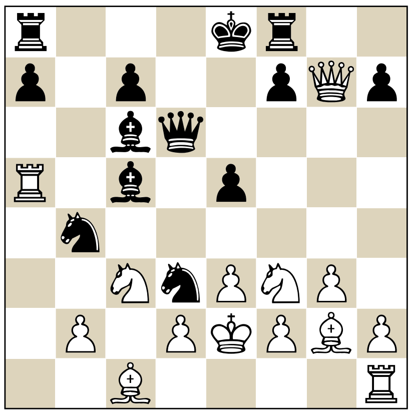


15.♖a2? The first of many miscalculations in this game.

The position is unclear after 15.♖b1 ♕d6 16.b4 ♗b6 17.♕g4 ♖d8 18.♕f5 ♔e7.

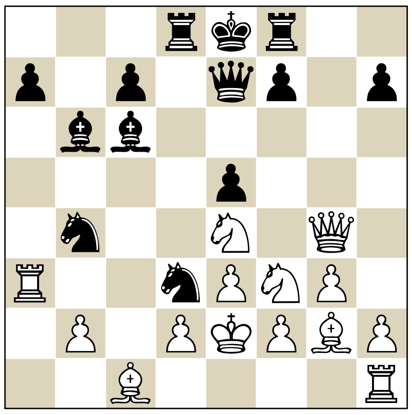
15...b4 Now Black is better.

16.axb4 ♘cxb4 17.♖a5 ♕d6



Black tries to deploy all his pieces to launch a strong attack.

18.♕g4 ♗b6 19.♖a3 ♖d8 20.♘e4 ♕e7? Too passive. Black could have exchanged queens with 20...♕g6, with a clear advantage.



21.♕f5?? With only a couple of minutes on the clock and the board

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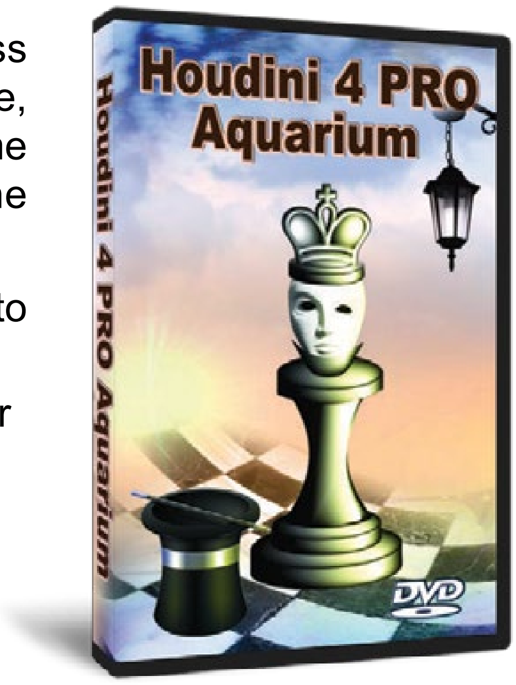

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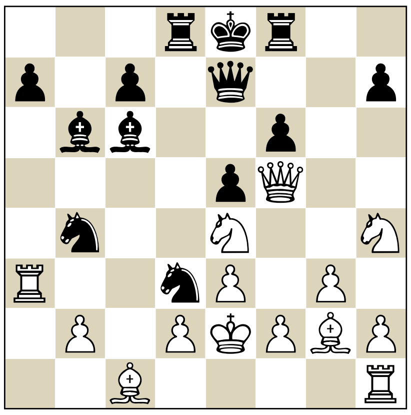
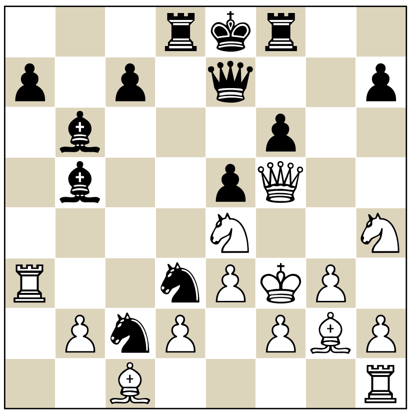
full of pieces one can easily lose one's way. 21.♘h4 ♕e6 would have led to an amusing repetition: 22.♘f5 ♕g6 23.♘g7+ ♔e7 24.♘f5+ ♔e8.

21...f6 After 21...♕e6 22.♕xe6+ fxe6 23.♘fg5 ♔e7 the white pieces are hopelessly pinned.

22.♘h4

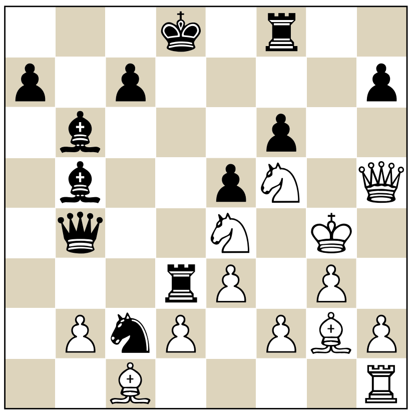


22...♗b5 A crucial motif. **23.♔f3** 23.♔d1 loses to 23...♕f7. **23...♘c2?** Why not 23...♕f7, and what should White do against the coming ...♗d7 ?

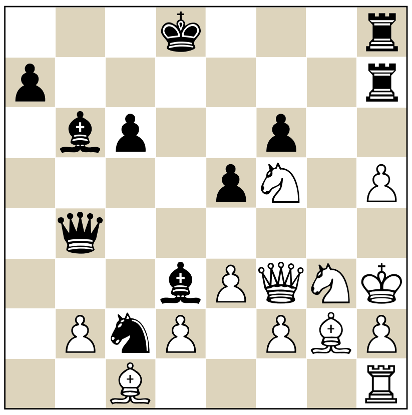


24.♖xd3 It is not a good idea to take this part of the game too seriously and analyse it thoroughly. Essentially it was just a blitz game with many errors. White is also lost after 24.♕h5+ ♕f7 25.♕xf7+ ♔xf7 26.♖xd3 ♖xd3.

24...♖xd3 25.♕h5+ ♔d8 26.♘f5 ♕b4 27.♔g4



27...♖d7?! Better was 27...♗e8 28.♕xh7 ♖d7, and Black is winning. **28.♔h3 ♗d3 29.♕f3 c6 30.g4 h5 31.gxh5 ♖h7 32.♘eg3 ♖fh8**



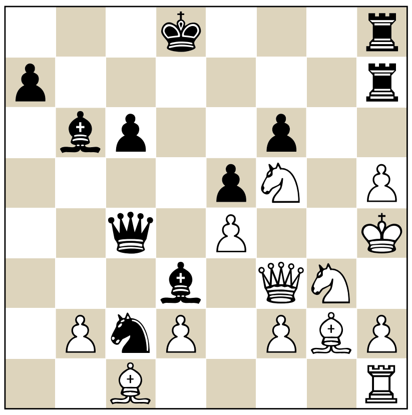
Rhodes 2013

			+	=	-	TB1	TB2	TB3
1	G-Team Novy Bor	CZE	6	0	1	13	236.0	28.5
2	Malachite	RUS	5	0	2	12	211.0	32.0
3	SOCAR	AZE	5	1	1	11	244.0	29.0
4	Clichy Echecs 92	FRA	5	1	1	11	206.0	29.0
5	Saint-Petersburg	RUS	5	1	1	11	199.5	29.0
6	Ugra	RUS	5	2	0	10	204.0	28.5
7	PGMB-Rostov	RUS	5	2	0	10	195.5	28.0
8	Minsk	BLR	5	2	0	10	187.0	27.5
9	Reichenstein SSB	SUI	5	2	0	10	174.5	29.0
10	O.R. Padova	ITA	5	2	0	10	168.0	23.5
11	Amay Chess Club	BEL	4	2	1	9	155.5	24.0
12	Limhamns SK	SWE	4	2	1	9	138.0	21.5
13	A.S.I. Bologna	ITA	4	2	1	9	133.0	23.0
14	Odlar Yurdu	AZE	3	2	2	8	185.5	25.5
15	Asker	NOR	4	3	0	8	156.0	28.0

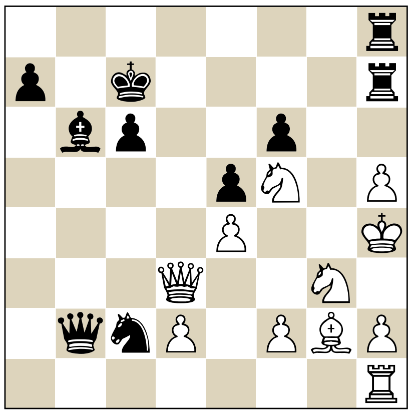
53 teams, 7 rounds

33.e4 Better was 33.♘h4 f5, and now not 34.♘hxf5 ♖g8, and Black is winning, but 34.♘g6.

33...♕c4 34.♔h4



34...♔c7 Stronger was 34...♖xh5+ 35.♘xh5 ♗e2 36.d3 ♗xf3, when 37.dxc4 leads to a cute mate: 37...♗xf2+ 38.♘g3 ♖xh5 mate. **35.b3 ♕xb3 36.♗b2 ♕xb2 37.♕xd3**

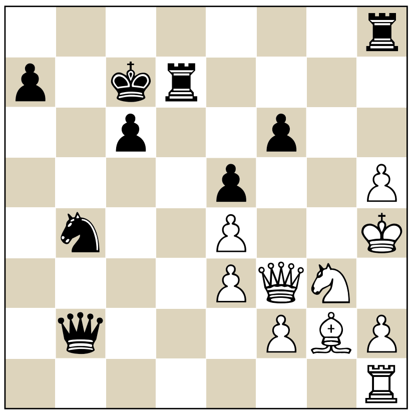


37...♖d7 More to the point was 37...♗xf2 38.♔h3 ♘e1 and Black wins.

38.♕f3 ♘b4

There was nothing wrong with 38...♖xd2.

39.♘e3 ♗xe3 40.dxe3



40...♘d3?

Black was completely winning. Sometimes very easily, sometimes with

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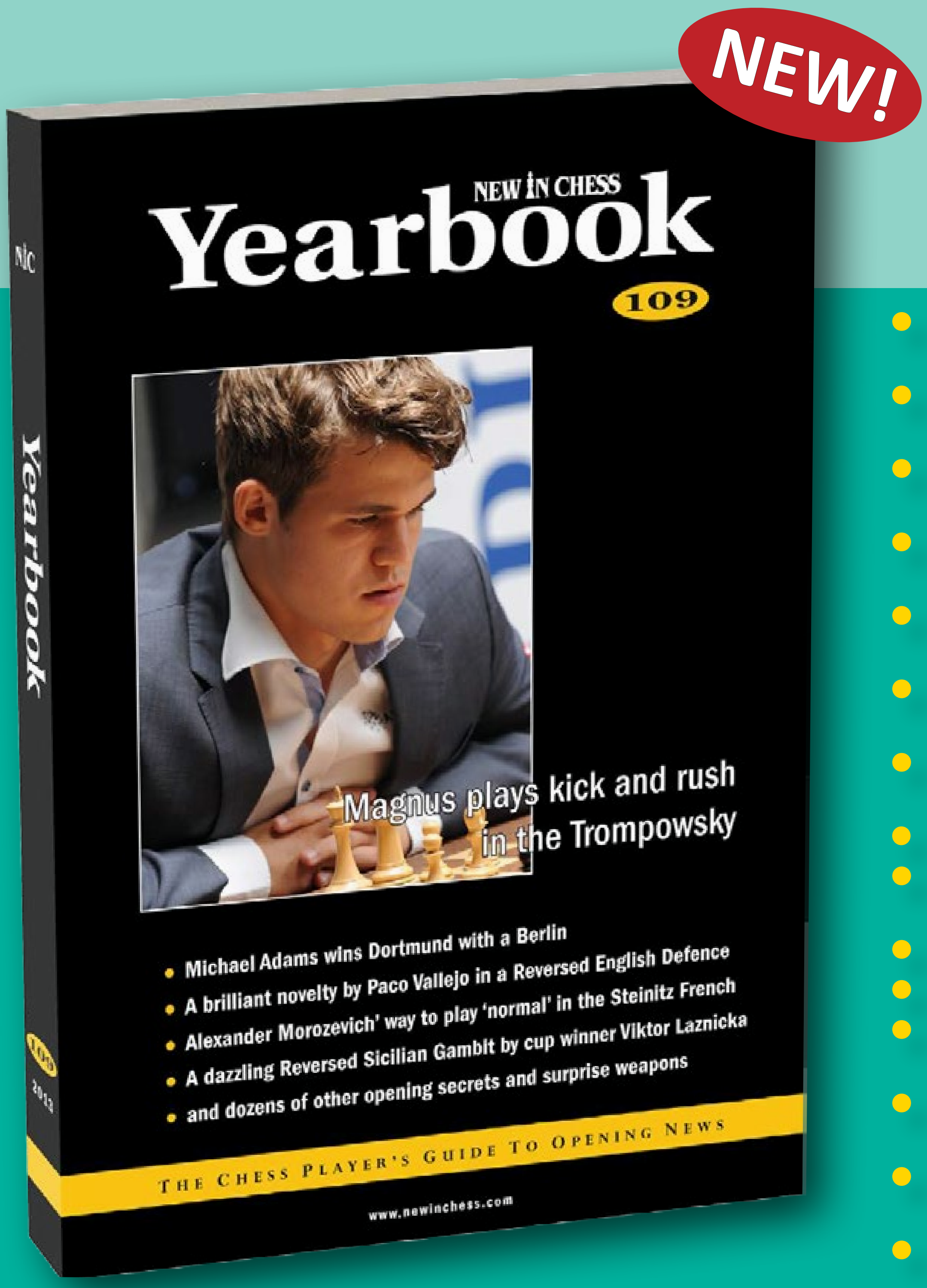

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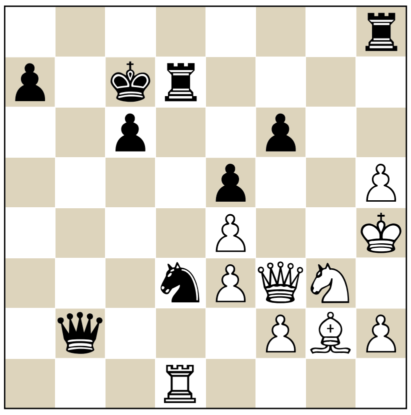
a little accuracy. However, after my last move before the time-control the position became only slightly better for Black and one could say that we were back to square one.

Black would still have been winning after 40...a5.

41.♖d1 Better was 41.♕xf6, when after 41...♖hh7 42.♖d1 ♕xf2 43.♕xf2 ♘xf2 44.♖a1 ♔b6 Black is only marginally better.



41...a5?

This move could definitely have put an end to all my winning chances.

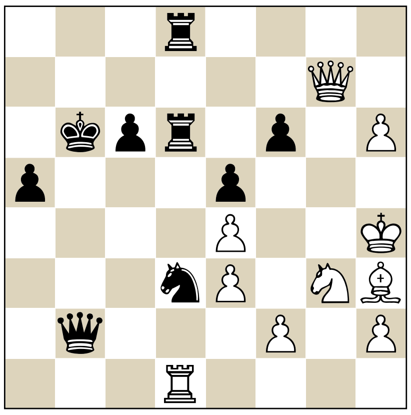
41...♕xf2 would not have yielded much either: 42.♖xd3 ♖xh5+ 43.♔xh5 ♕xf3+ 44.♗xf3 ♖xd3 45.♗e2 ♖xe3 46.♔g4 a5 47.h4 a4 48.h5 a3 49.♗c4 ♖c3 50.♗g8, and this should end in a draw.

The only try for Black was 41...♖f8, with a slight pull.

42.♗h3

White's pieces have become very active suddenly and this activity provides sufficient compensation for a draw.

42...♖d6 43.♕g4 ♖hd8 44.♕g7+ ♔b6 45.h6

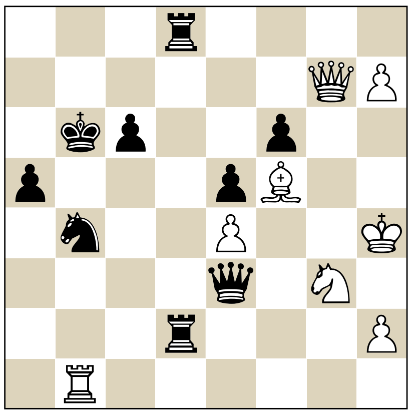


This is White's trump.

45...♕xf2 46.♖b1+ ♘b4 47.h7 ♕xe3 48.♗f5 ♖d2

The last chance to confuse my opponent.

I could have made a draw with 48...♕g5+ 49.♕xg5 fxg5+ 50.♔xg5 c5 51.♘f1 a4 52.♘e3 ♔b5 53.♖c1 ♖d2 54.♔f6 ♖2d6+ 55.♔g5.



49.♖h1?!

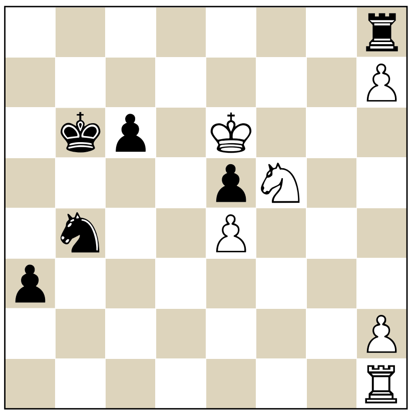
Even after this move the game remains pretty drawish, yet White has to be on his guard.

Simpler was 49.♔h3, with an easy draw: 49...♖h8 50.♕xh8 ♕h6+ 51.♔g4 ♕g5+ 52.♔h3 ♕h6+.

49...♕g5+ 50.♕xg5 fxg5+ 51.♔xg5 a4 52.♔f6 a3 53.♗e6

53.♔g7 invites disaster: 53...a2 54.♗e6 ♖xh2 55.♗xa2 ♖xh1 56.♘xh1 ♘xa2 57.♘f2 ♔c5, and Black wins.

53...♖2d6 54.♘f5 ♖xe6+ 55.♔xe6 ♖h8



56.♔xe5

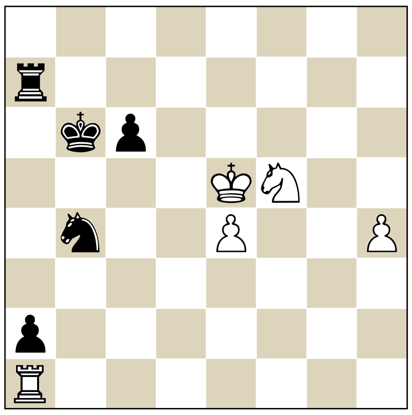
Still not the losing move. White could have immediately pushed his h-pawn, forcing a draw: 56.h4 ♖xh7 57.h5 a2 58.h6 ♘c2 59.♔xe5 a1♕+ 60.♖xa1 ♘xa1 61.♔f6 ♘c2 62.♔g6 ♖h8 63.♔g7.

56...a2 57.♖a1

White could force a draw with 57.♔f6 ♖xh7 58.h4 ♖a7 59.h5 a1♕+ 60.♖xa1 ♖xa1 61.h6.

57...♖xh7 58.h4 ♖a7

Another way to draw was 58...c5 59.♔f6 ♖a7 60.♘e3 c4 61.h5 ♔c5 62.h6 ♔d4 63.♘xc4 ♔xc4 64.♔g6 ♘d3 65.h7 ♘e5+ 66.♔f5.

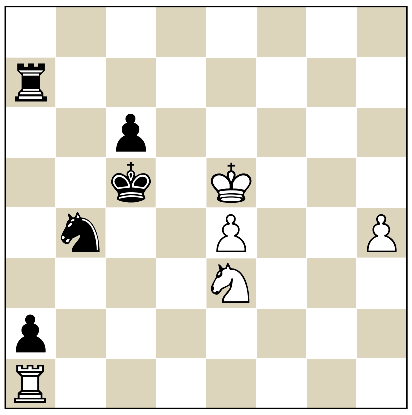


59.♘e3??

And after this there is no way back after all. White was again short of time and could not assess some long lines correctly, e.g. 59.h5 ♘c2 60.♖xa2 ♖xa2 61.h6 c5 62.h7 ♖a8 63.♔f6 c4 64.♘e7 ♖h8 65.♔g7 ♖xh7+ 66.♔xh7 ♘b4 67.♘f5 c3 68.♘d4 ♔c5 69.♘e2 c2 70.♔g6 ♔c4 71.e5 ♔d3 72.♘c1+ ♔d2 73.e6, with a draw.

59...♔c5

Now it is no longer difficult.



60.♖c1+

60.h5 is met by 60...♖h7 and wins.

60...♔b5 61.♖a1 ♖a3 62.♘f5 ♔c4 63.h5 ♘c2 64.♖xa2 ♖xa2 65.h6 ♖a7 66.♔f6 ♘d4 67.♘e7 ♖a1 68.h7 ♖h1 69.♔g7 ♘e6+ 70.♔g8 ♖g1+ 71.♔f7 ♘g5+ 72.♔g6 ♘xh7+ 73.♔xh7 c5 74.♘f5 ♖e1

White resigned. ■

Jan Timman

Looking for the bright side of 2800

Due to a congested calendar and the inevitable absence of a number of star players, the Bilbao Final Masters and the Kings Tournament in Bucharest received less press exposure than in previous years. **Jan Timman** takes a closer look at the winners, both of whom have been fighting their own fights with the magical 2800 boundary.

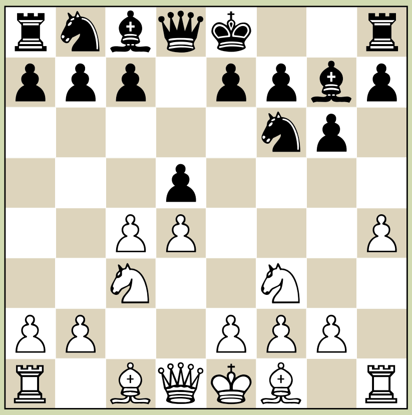
After his disappointing Candidates' tournament in London Ivanchuk observed that, in principle, he still aspires to becoming World Champion, although he immediately qualified this by adding that young players like Carlsen and Caruana were far more likely to achieve this. This was the first time that Caruana and Carlsen were mentioned in the same breath. Caruana's advance from strong grandmaster to absolute top player had been swift. In early 2012 he had still been overshadowed by Giri, who won the New Year's tournament in Reggio Emilia in outstanding fashion. One and a half years later, the roles were reversed. Giri was busy finishing his secondary education and trying to find his feet. Caruana, two years older, had never had these problems; he became a professional at 12 years of age, when his parents moved from New York to Madrid.

Last summer, Caruana got very close to the magical 2800 boundary. After beating Andreikin in the first round in Dortmund he had already crossed it in a virtual sense. Then it was just a matter of keeping his form. Except he didn't. The rest of his tournament was a huge disappointment. But Caruana is a never-say-die kind of guy. He came back in the Grand Prix tournament in Paris, where his shared first place was an excellent result, although a whisker short of an entry ticket to the Candidates' (see New In Chess 2013/7). For this he should have eschewed move repetition against Dominguez in the final round, which he had gone for without much thought. This decision was sharply criticized, for example by Romain Edouard, who analysed the game for ChessBase.

I thought Caruana was right in accepting the draw. Every top player has his or her values in a position. If you think that a position is objectively balanced, forcing things goes against the grain. Besides, Caruana will have plenty of time to prove himself, and this, apparently, is how he sees it himself. After the tournament he tweeted that life goes on and that he was going to play a tournament in Bucharest, the annual Kings Tournament, which he started by beating the Rumanian representative.

GI 7.1 – D90
Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu
Fabiano Caruana
Bucharest 2013 (1)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♘f3 ♗g7 5.h4



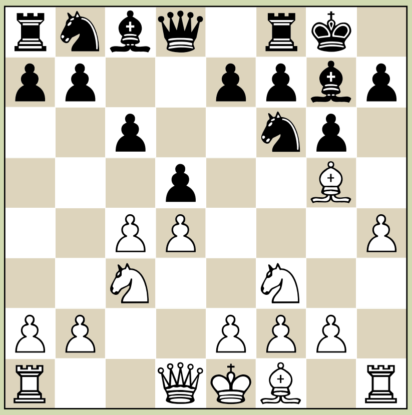
A wild push that has gained some popularity because of Morozevich. Purely classically oriented chess players are bound to reject this experiment by White, but I myself have gradually come to realize that it allows White to make a serious attempt at securing an opening advantage.

5...c6

The variation is still in its development stage. Four days after this game, Vachier-Lagrave played 5...dxc4 against Mamedyarov in Bilbao, and after 6.e4 c5 7.d5 b5 8.h5 ♘xh5 9.♘xb5 0-0 a very sharp battle ensued. 5...c5 has been played here, too.

The text seems somewhat modest, yet it is a principled choice: by covering the d-pawn again Black challenges his opponent to justify the advance of the h-pawn.

6.♗g5 0-0

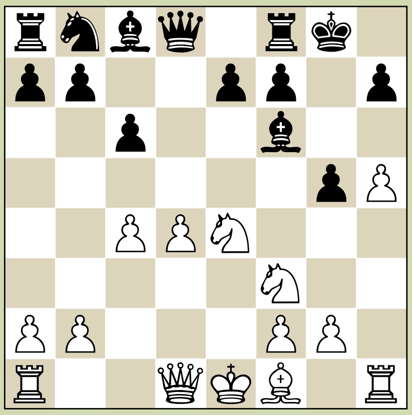


7.♗xf6 With this voluntary exchange White manages to force the further advance of the h-pawn. Interestingly enough, the game now takes on something of the character of the Tartakower Variation of the Classical Queen's Gambit. In that line, too, White often swaps on f6 in order to go for queenside castling, except that here Black still has the possibility of developing his queen's bishop outside the pawn chain.

7...♗xf6 8.h5 g5 9.e4

The most direct approach. Alternatives are 9.h6 and 9.e3.

9...dxe4 10.♘xe4



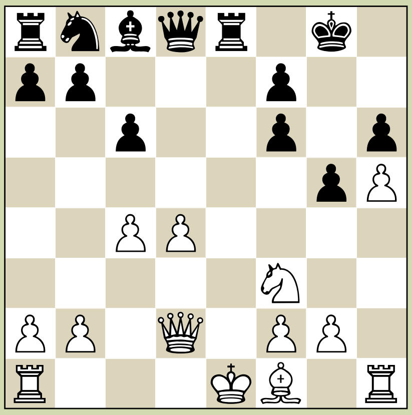
10...h6 The computer prefers 10...g4, but I think this is precisely what Nisipeanu had prepared for. After 11.♘xf6+ exf6 12.♘h4 ♖e8+ 13.♗e2 ♖e4 White can sacrifice his d-pawn with 14.0-0, with excellent compensation for the pawn in the shattered black king position. The white knight is also positioned very strongly.

'Never-say-die kind of guy' Fabiano Caruana claimed the Kings Tournament, but once again the 2800 boundary remained out of reach.

The text leaves Black's pawn structure intact.

11.♘xf6+ Strategically correct, but not so good here, because White has not yet mobilized all his forces. Stronger was 11.♕d2, intending to castle queenside as quickly as possible.

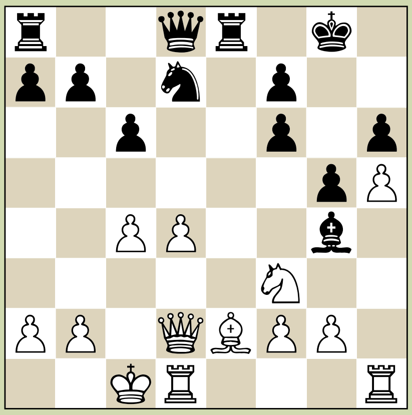
11...exf6 12.♕d2 ♖e8+



This is White's problem. The open e-file allows Black to grab the initiative.

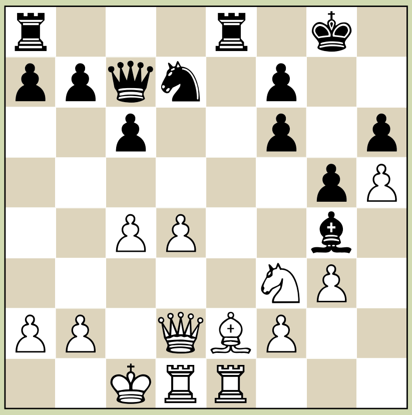
13.♗e2 ♗g4 14.0-0-0 ♘d7

Developing the knight with 14...♘a6, with the possible aim of a sortie to b4, might have been stronger. Now White gets a chance to recover.



15.♖he1 This rook move doesn't solve anything. White should have regrouped with 15.♘g1!, when Black cannot swap bishops for fear of exposing his weaknesses on the kingside. After 15...♗e6 16.♔b1 the chances would be roughly equal.

15...♕c7 16.g3

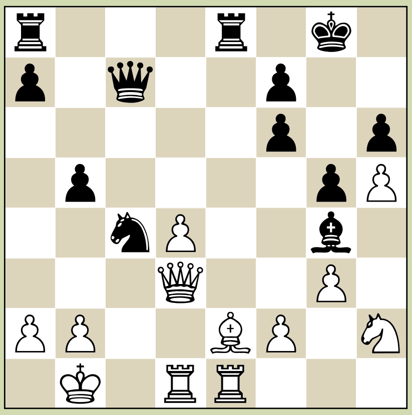


16...b5! The well-known breaking move from the Caro-Kann, which is very effective here.

17.cxb5 cxb5+ 18.♔b1 ♘b6!

On its way to c4. After 18...♗xh5 the situation would have been less clear, since 19.♖h1 ♗g6+ 20.♗d3 would yield White some compensation for the pawn.

19.♘h2 ♘c4 20.♕d3

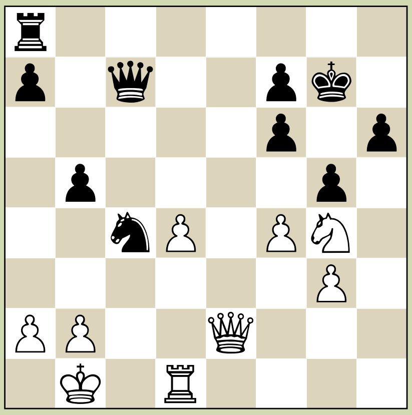


20...♖xe2! Strong play. Black is hanging on to the bishop for a little while longer.

21.♖xe2 ♗xh5 22.f4

White is desperately trying to stay afloat, and he is almost successful. With the text he prevents 22...♗g6, while at the same time generating some counterplay on the kingside.

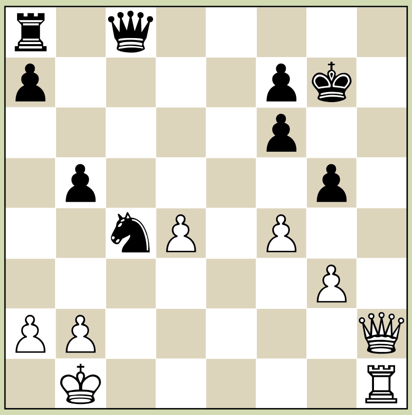
22...♗xe2 23.♕xe2 ♔g7 24.♘g4



24...♖c8

Caruana allows his concentration to flag briefly. Deploying the rook makes complete sense in itself, but in this sharp battle there were different priorities.

Very strong and almost winning was 24...♕c8!. The queen attacks the white knight, while at the same time opening the possibility of a check on f5. But the main point is that the white knight sacrifice on h6 has become impossible: after 25.♘xh6 ♔xh6 26.♖h1+ ♔g7 27.♕h2 Black has the magnificent defensive move



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

27...♕h8!. It's easy to overlook such a move in your calculations.

25.♘xh6!

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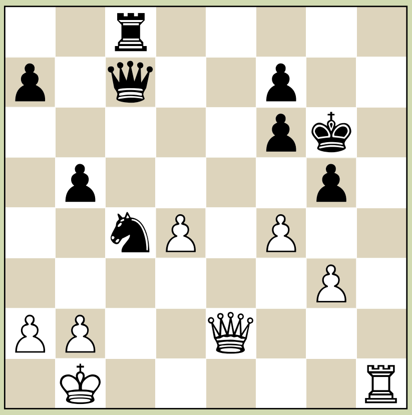
Now he can! The knight sac is enough for a draw.

25...♔xh6 26.♖h1+ ♔g6

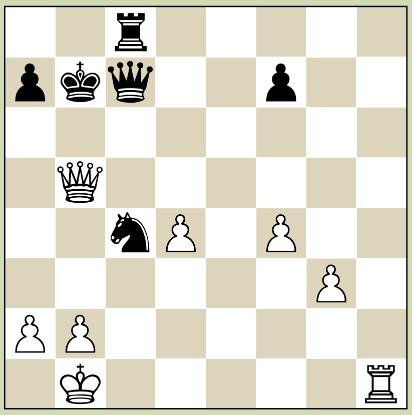


27.♕c2+ White is panicking. He wants to take the flight square f5 away from the black king, but this is completely unnecessary. After 27.♕h2 ♔f5 28.♕e2 Black has nothing better than 28...♔g6 to prevent his king from being caught in a mating net. A quiet move like 27.d5 would also have been enough, because Black doesn't have a single threat. He has nothing better than 27...♔g7 28.♕h2 ♔f8, which is met by 29.♖e1, and the king is forced back to the g-file.

27...f5

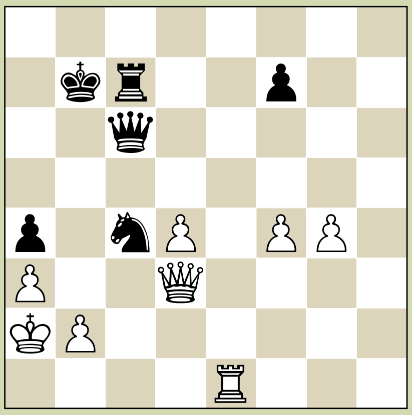
Suddenly, Black has square f6 for his king, which is a far better flight square than f5.

28.♕h2 ♔f6 29.♕h6+ ♔e7 30.♕xg5+ ♔d7 31.♕xf5+ ♔c6 32.♕c5+ ♔b7 33.♕xb5+



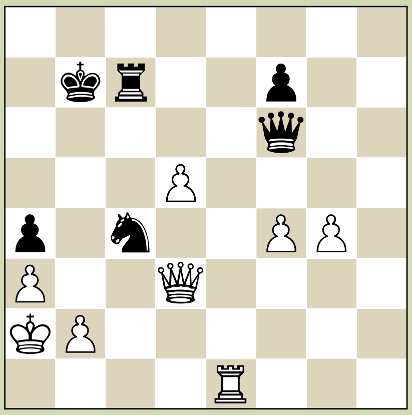
33...♘b6 At the expense of three pawns, the black king has escaped from the danger zone. Black is better because the white pawns cannot become dangerous. In addition, the extra knight may provide him with attacking chances, although the white king is safe for the moment.

34.♕d3 ♕c6 35.♖e1 ♖c7 36.a3 a5 37.g4 ♘c4 38.♔a2 a4



39.d5 Just before the time-control, Nisipeanu loses his grip. There was nothing wrong with 39.g5, intending to advance the kingside flank pawns as far as possible. The text gives Black starting-points for an attack.

39...♕f6

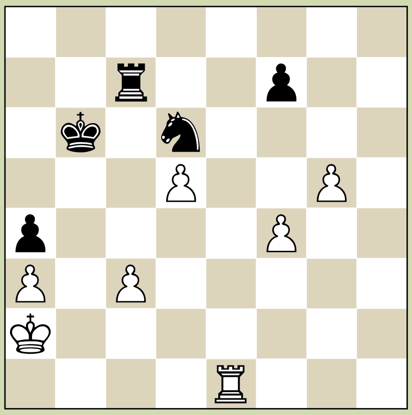


40.♕c3 An instructive error. White understandably wants to exchange queens, but this happens in an extremely bad situation for him. White's queenside pawns become weak and Black has everything ready to permanently block them. So now Black's win is simply a matter of technique. With 40.♖e2 White could have survived for the moment.

40...♕xc3 41.bxc3 ♔b6

On its way to c5.

42.g5 ♘d6 A complete blockade. Harvest time for Black.



43.♖b1+ ♔c5 44.♖b4 ♖a7 45.♔b2 ♘c4+ 46.♔a2 ♘e3 47.♖b8 ♘xd5 48.f5 ♘e7 49.♖e8 ♔c4 50.f6 ♘g6 51.♔b2 ♖a5 52.♖c8+ ♔d5 53.c4+ ♔d4 54.♖c7 ♘e5 55.♔c2 ♖c5 56.♖a7 ♖xc4+ 57.♔d1 ♔d5 White resigned.

With additional wins against Radjabov and Ponomariov, as well as some draws, Caruana had quickly ensured tournament victory, which really left only one aim: the 2800 boundary. For this he would have to beat Wang Hao with white in the ninth and penultimate round. Caruana lost instead, and the boundary has receded again.

■ ■ ■

Concurrently with the Kings Tournament, the sixth Bilbao Final Masters was held. Anand and Carlsen begged off because of their preparation for the World Championship match, but Aronian was there. It was very important for him to make up for his mediocre performance in St Louis, and although he was critical of the level of his play the Armenian came out victorious. In a sense, Aronian's career has been the opposite of Caruana's for the last 18 months. After his superior

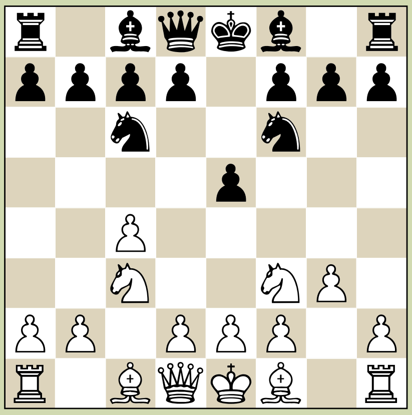
Bucharest 2013										cat. XX
				1	2	4	5	5		TPR
1 **Fabiano Caruana**	IGM	ITA	2779	* *	½ 0	1 ½	1 ½	½ 1	5	2815
2 **Wang Hao**	IGM	CHN	2733	½ 1	* *	0 ½	½ ½	½ 1	4½	2774
3 **Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu**	IGM	ROU	2674	0 ½	1 ½	* *	½ ½	½ ½	4	2746
4 **Teimour Radjabov**	IGM	AZE	2723	0 ½	½ ½	½ ½	* *	½ ½	3½	2691
5 **Ruslan Ponomariov**	IGM	UKR	2751	½ 0	½ 0	½ ½	½ ½	* *	3	2640

win in the Tata Steel tournament of January 2012, I thought that he was ready to enter the fight for the top. His opening preparation was deep and effective, and he always found the right route in the middlegame and endgame. But Aronian didn't allow his head to be turned: he had done what he always did; it was just that his opponents made mistakes. False modesty? However this may be, there were very few successes after Wijk aan Zee. After St Louis he even dipped below 2800, something that hadn't happened since 2010. On the November FIDE list he was back in second place with a 2801 rating.

I was glad to see Aronian operating in his usual style in Bilbao. He started awkwardly enough and didn't get too far as White, but as Black he dealt two merciless blows. The following game could have been very good if it had not been marred by errors on both sides in the time-trouble phase.

EO 13.4 – A29
Maxime Vachier-Lagrave
Levon Aronian
Bilbao 2013 (4)

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 e5 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.g3



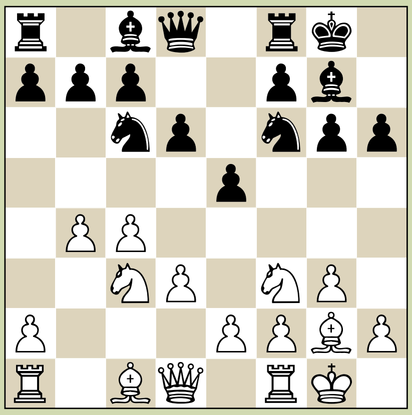
An important starting position of the Four Knight's Game in the English Opening. Black now has no fewer than four continuations, all leading to different kinds of play.

4...g6 The alternatives are 4...d5, 4...♗b4 and 4...♗c5.

5.♗g2 ♗g7 6.0-0 0-0 7.d3 h6
This move seems mainly intended to prevent 8.♗g5, although it is doubtful that Vachier-Lagrave would have played it. In Biel, earlier this year, he went for 8.b3.

8.b4 In these circumstances, White can play this advance without further preparation.

8...d6



9.♖b1
After this move the immediate advance of the b-pawn is of no inde-

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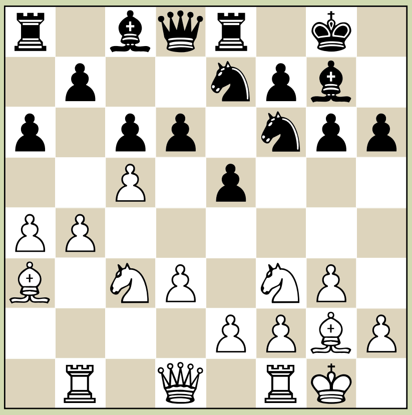
pendent significance. Crucial was 9.b5 ♘e7 10.a4, after which the rook is no worse on a1 than on b1.

But Vachier-Lagrave follows a different plan. He postpones the push of the b-pawn with a view to possibly playing c4-c5.

9...a6 10.a4 ♘e7 11.♗a3 c6 12.c5 According to plan.

12...♖e8 A useful little move. Now 13.cxd6 can be met by 13...♘f5.



13.e4 A principled move. White wants to take away squares d5 and f5 from the black knight. The drawback is that, as in the Sicilian with reversed colours, square d4 may become weak. A harmonious-looking alternative is 13.♕c2.

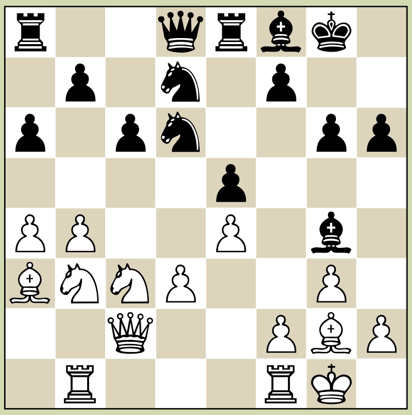
The computer has another interesting idea, viz. 13.♗b2, with the aim of putting pressure on e5. This can lead to extremely sharp complications. Here is a possible variation: 13...♘f5 14.e4 ♘d4 15.♘xd4 exd4 16.♘e2 a5 17.♗xd4 axb4 18.cxd6 ♕xd6 19.e5 ♖xe5 20.♗xe5 ♕xe5 21.♖xb4 ♗f8, and Black has positional compensation for the exchange. The variation contains a whole range of different positions.

13...♗g4 14.♕b3 ♘d7

Aronian is playing very purposefully here. He starts by finding better squares for his knights.

Levon Aronian made up for his mediocre performance in St.Louis with a win in Bilbao.

15.♘d2 ♘c8 16.♕c2 ♗f8 17.cxd6 ♘xd6 18.♘b3



18...b5!

And now he takes the initiative. But the balance has not been upset yet.

19.h3

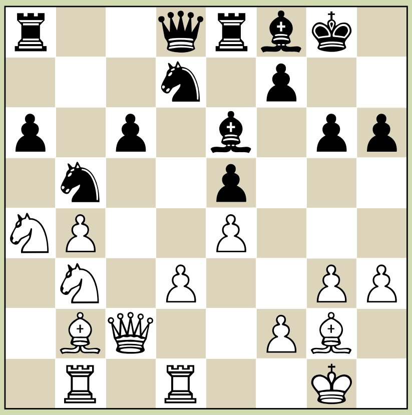
A better idea would probably have been to transfer the queen's bishop, which is useless on a3, to e3 by means of 19.♗c1.

19...♗e6 20.♖fd1 bxa4 21.♘xa4 ♘b5 22.♗b2

Bilbao 2013 **cat. XXI**

					1	2	3	4		TPR
1	Levon Aronian	IGM	ARM	2795	* *	½ 1	½ 1	½ ½	10	2876
2	Michael Adams	IGM	ENG	2753	½ 0	* *	1 1	½ ½	9	2822
3	Maxime Vachier-Lagrave	IGM	FRA	2742	½ 0	0 0	* *	1 ½	5	2644
4	Shakhriyar Mamedyarov	IGM	AZE	2759	½ ½	½ ½	0 ½	* *	5	2706

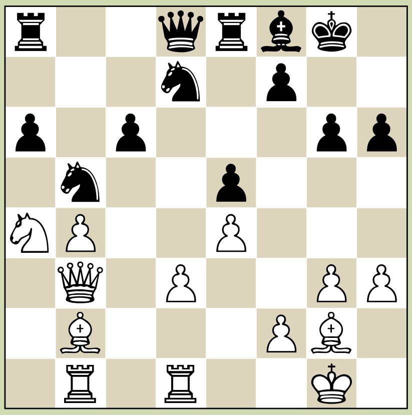
3 points for a win, 1 for a draw, 0 for a loss



22...♗xb3

Normally it is not a good idea to give up one's queen's bishop in these types of positions in view of the danger of the light squares becoming weak. But Aronian has seen that this will be fully compensated for by Black's resulting control of the central squares.

23.♕xb3



23...c5 The computer has some slight preference for the other breaking move, 23...a5, but the problem there is that this leads to drawish positions. Aronian wants to keep his a-pawn, because after a swap on c5 it has good potential to become a strong passed pawn. And it is this pawn that will eventually decide the game!

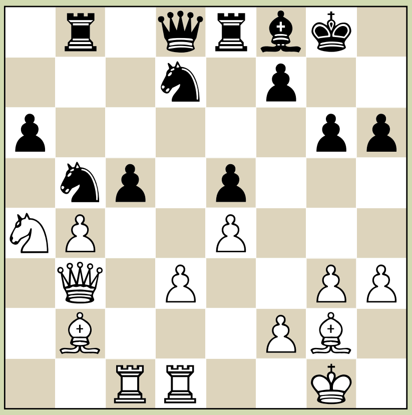
24.♖bc1 White wants to maintain the tension. The computer thinks that White could have swapped twice on c5 here and assesses the position after 24.bxc5 ♘xc5 25.♘xc5 ♗xc5 as balanced. But I can't imagine White players voluntarily going for this, since Black has the classical control of square d4, so he can await developments with confidence.

With the text White intends to sacrifice a pawn in exchange for the initia-

tive. After 24...cxb4 he wants to continue with 25.♖c6.

24...♖b8

Black also maintains the tension.

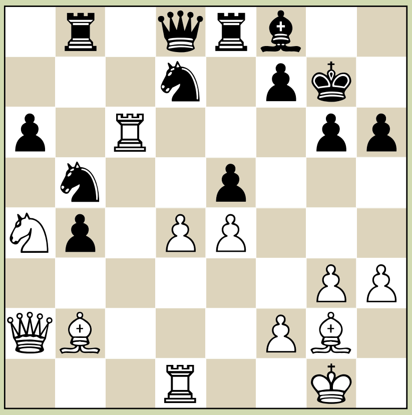


25.♕a2

Stepping out of the vis-à-vis along the b-file. Interesting, and probably objectively best, was sacrificing the exchange with 25.bxc5. After 25...♘d4 26.♕a2 ♘e2+ 27.♔h2 ♘xc1 28.♖xc1 the position is dynamically balanced.

25...cxb4 26.♖c6 ♔g7 27.d4

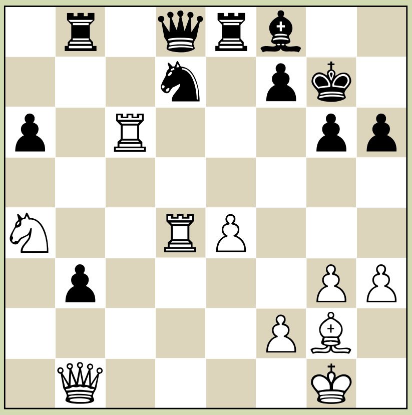
The best way to continue the fight for the initiative.



27...b3!

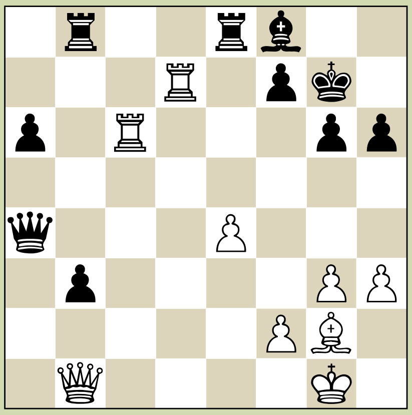
A strong zwischenzug. The white queen is forced to the back rank.

28.♕b1 exd4 29.♗xd4+ ♘xd4 30.♖xd4

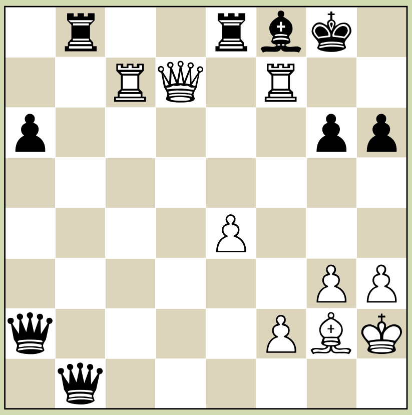


30...♕a5 The best move from a practical point of view, although the game could have ended in a forced draw now. The computer thinks that Black could have held on to his advantage with either 30...♕e7 or 30...♔g8, but things are not totally clear. After 30...♕e7 31.♖c7, for example, Black still finds himself in an annoying pin, and after 30...♔g8 31.e5 White also has counterplay.

31.♖xd7 ♕xa4



32.e5 A logical enough move in itself. White opens diagonals for his queen and bishop. Yet it is insufficient. To save the game, White should at once have gone for the weakness in the enemy position: the f7-pawn. Necessary was 32.♖cc7, when the play takes on a forced character: 32...♕a2! 33.♖xf7+ ♔g8 34.♕d3 b2 35.♕d7! b1♕+ 36.♔h2

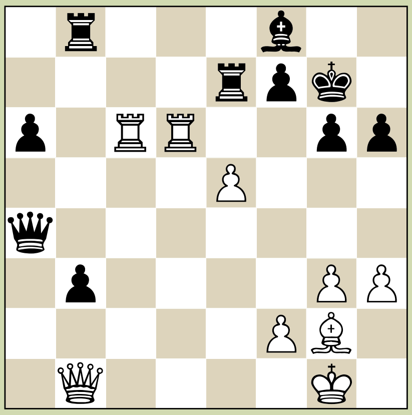


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

An incredible situation. Black has queened a pawn with check, but this is still not enough to win the game. All the white major pieces are looming ominously on the seventh rank, and Black will have problems covering all the threatened spots. First, square g7 must be covered by the new queen: 36...♕bb2 (or 36...♕ba1). This allows White to force a draw: 37.♖xf8+! ♔xf8 38.♕d6+ ♔g8 39.♕xg6+, with perpetual check.

32...♖e7! An important defensive move. Black neutralizes the 7th rank.

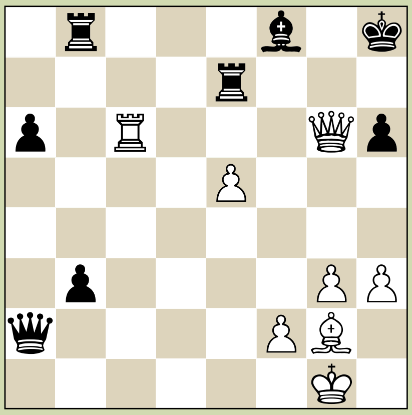
33.♖dd6



33...♕a2? What was a crucial move in the variation under White's 32nd move is now a terrible mistake, with which Black not only gives away the win but even lands himself in a losing position. He had no time to waste and should have advanced the b-pawn at once. After 33...b2 the white queen would be tied to the blockading square b1, stymying his attack.

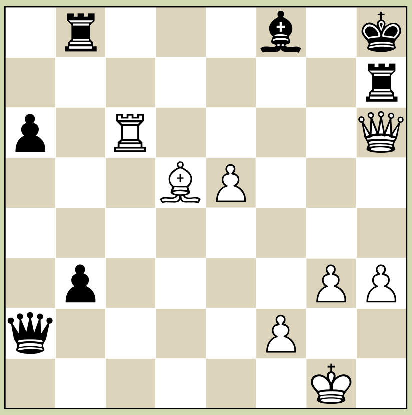
Aronian, incidentally, still had lots of time here. I have noticed before that he is inclined to become somewhat nonchalant in winning positions. This may be an obstacle on the way to the very top.

34.♖xg6+ fxg6 35.♕xg6+ ♔h8



36.♗d5! Black must have missed this move. The bishop decisively involves itself in the attack. After any other move Black would still have been winning.

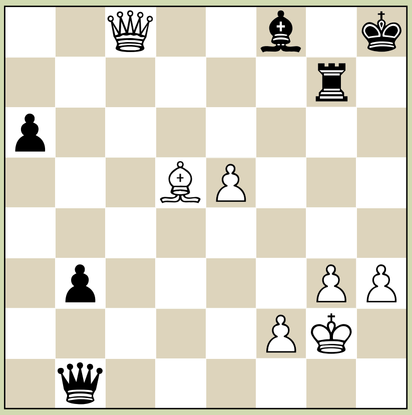
36...♖g7 37.♕xh6+ ♖h7



38.♕e6? Contrary to Aronian, Vachier-Lagrave was in serious time-trouble, otherwise he would probably have found that 38.♕g6! was winning. There is a great difference between the two queen moves: from g6 the queen can always go to the h-file to harass the black king. Another important point is that it deprives the black queen of square b1.

After 38.♕g6 ♗g7 39.♗e4 ♖h6 40.♕f5! ♕d2 41.♖c8+ Black must give his queen to prevent mate. Interestingly enough, the seemingly powerful black b-pawn only hampers the defence in these variations.

38...♕b1+ Thanks to this check, Black reasserts his control. **39.♔g2 ♖g7** Black's defence is just about sufficient. **40.♖c8 ♖xc8 41.♕xc8**



41...♖g8!

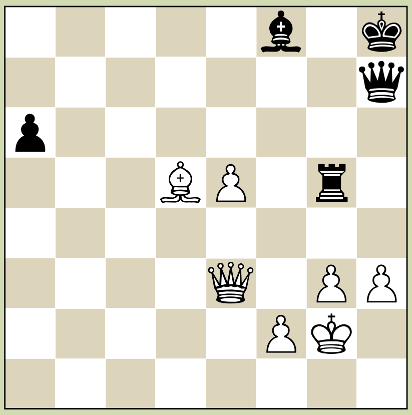
Another important defensive move.

42.♕b7

The alternative was 42.♗xg8, but after 42...♕e4+ 43.♔g1 ♔xg8 44.♕e6+ ♔h8 45.♕xb3 ♕xe5 the black a-pawn will eventually have to decide.

42...♕h7 Black remains a rook up against a handful of pawns.

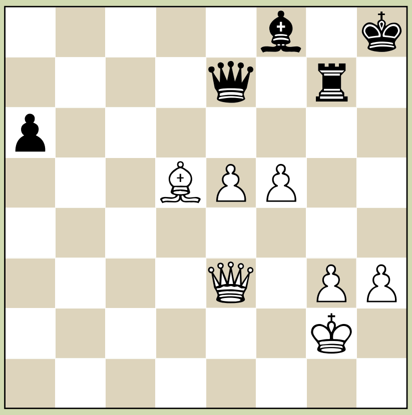
43.♕xb3 ♖g5 44.♕e3



44...♕e7 Stronger was 44...♕f5, when the supporting move 45.f4 fails to 45...♕c2+, with a decisive advantage.

45.f4 ♖g7 46.f5

Maintaining the pawn chain would have been more tenacious, but eventually the black a-pawn would still have been decisive.



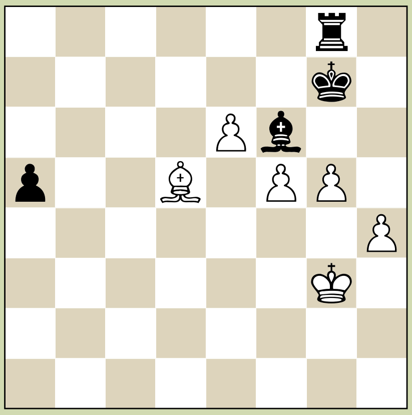
46...♕g5!

Forcing a queen swap. Aronian has calculated sharply that the endgame is winning for Black.

47.♕xg5 ♖xg5 48.g4 ♗g7!

Part of an effective plan to block the white pawn front. First the white e-pawn is forced to advance further.

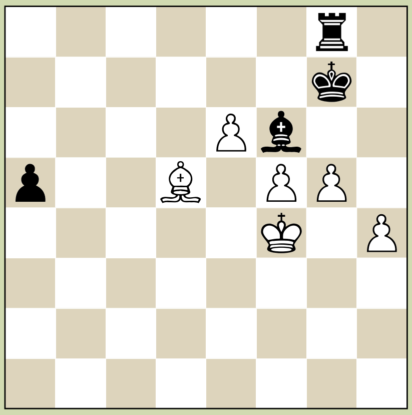
49.e6 ♗f6 50.♔g3 a5 51.h4 ♖g8 52.g5 ♔g7



The point of the previous moves. Black gives his bishop for a total blockade. The passed a-pawn must provide the decision.

53.♔f4

While following the game online, I was not completely sure that Black was winning here, and the computer finds it hard to make up its mind as well. Aronian finishes the game with a steady hand and without using up too much time.



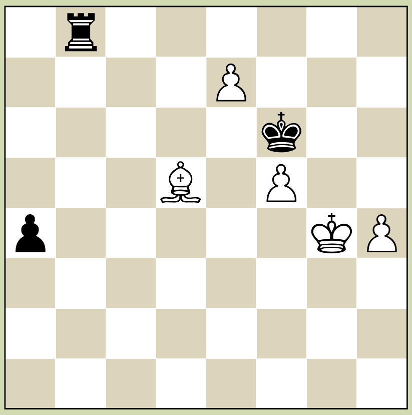
53...♖h8!

Not even with the intention of capturing on h4, since Black will meet 54.♔e3 with 54...a4 55.♔d3 ♖d8, and wins. The rook move is primarily meant to prevent any white counterplay after 54.h5.

54.♔g4 ♖b8

Played almost at once. Again the advance of the h-pawn is prevented, this time in view of a check on b4. Now the way for the black a-pawn is clear.

55.gxf6+ ♔xf6 56.e7 a4



White resigned. This win together with a win against Adams and four further draws secured tournament victory for Levon Aronian ■

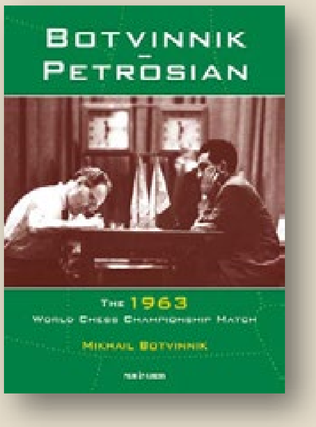
Best forgotten? Huge struggles and thrilling battles of will!

I'm writing this just as the first game of Carlsen-Anand has got underway. Hey, actually it's just stopped. That illustrates quite well my ambivalence regarding World Championship matches. You look forward to them so much, but they rarely seem to deliver. To be honest, after Garry's matches with Nigel in 1993 and Anand in 1995, all the subsequent World Championship matches feel a bit hazy and blurred in my head.

My interest in World Championship matches was rekindled though by Garry Kasparov's fantastic series *My Great Predecessors*. You can easily succumb to a feeling of inevitability when you look back at great events from the past. Alekhine was destined to beat Capablanca, and Fischer was destined to beat Spassky and so you tend to view the games themselves as neither important nor interesting. I'd grown up with the idea that Alekhine-Capablanca was an appallingly dull match in which Capablanca played badly (blundering in the first game), in which boring draws were the rule (25 of the 34 games were drawn), and which came to a merciful end after some wonderful endgame play by Alekhine in the final game. Kasparov's commentary on the match (first focusing on the match from Capablanca's point of view, and then in the next chapter from Alekhine's point of view) was a revelation for me. It turned the match into a thrilling battle of wills; even the short draws looked meaningful in that context. That experience stimulated me to take a fresh look at a few other World Championship matches.

In the past month I've spent a lot of time reading and re-reading *Botvinnik-Petrosian. The 1963 World Chess Championship Match*. This is another of those matches that I assumed was best ignored. Botvinnik was past his best (after all, he'd only regained his crown from Tal due to the dubious 'return match' rule) and got ground down by a younger, hungrier opponent. That may be a decent summary, but it doesn't do any justice to the huge struggle that took place. Once again, Kasparov's *My Great Predecessors* gives a great account of the match.

The book is a compilation of annotations from various sources. Botvinnik annotates seven of the games, Petrosian analyses two of his wins, and GMs Akopian, Panov, Taimanov, Kotov, Kortchnoi and Bagirov annotate the rest. Kasparov also contributes his annotations from *My Great Predecessors* to Petrosian's magisterial win in the 15th game. There is also a lot of very interesting bonus material. Petrosian describes his preparation for the match, Botvinnik reviews the match in a frank and open analysis entitled 'Why did I lose the match?' and there is a complete collection of previous and subsequent Botvinnik-Petrosian encounters as well as the game scores of a Botvinnik-Furman training match played before the match. There are also extracts of analysis from Botvinnik's famous notebooks… But those are rather disappointing! Surely you couldn't be World Champion with analysis like that!



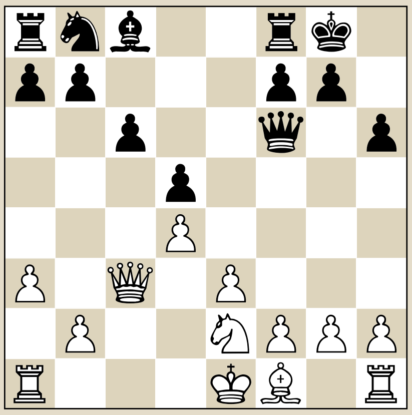
Botvinnik - Petrosian
The 1963 World Chess
Championship Match
by Mikhail Botvinnik
New In Chess, 2010

I've always assumed that the first game in a match must be crucial. A strong first game seemed to me like scoring a goal just before half-time in football: a big psychological blow for your adversary. Petrosian makes the point that in all the previous matches that went favourably for Botvinnik, he had seized the lead at the very start. So Petrosian… went and lost the first game terribly! Just digressing slightly, in his wonderful *The Life and Games of Mikhail Tal* Tal amusingly describes his approach to the first game of his 1960 match against Botvinnik: 'I have to admit that my frame of mind prior to the first game was not particularly optimistic: there was good reason for this. The fact was that in the preceding years I had developed the "nice" habit of beginning a tournament with a loss. This had become so ingrained in me that the result of the first game did not come as a surprise either to me, to my opponent, who turned up for the game to receive his 'due' point, or to my friends who began listening to chess reports and buying bulletins only after the second round. One of my friends… suggested that I should simply not turn up for the start of the match, but should join in at the second game.' Tal…won brilliantly!

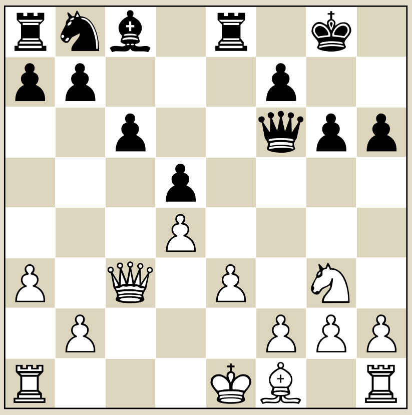
That first game was a really impressive Botvinnik performance. I loved his opening: power-play!

NI 23.14 – E35
Tigran Petrosian
Mikhail Botvinnik
Moscow 1963 (1st match game)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 d5 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗g5 h6 7.♗xf6 ♕xf6 8.a3 ♗xc3+ 9.♕xc3 c6 10.e3 0-0 11.♘e2



White wants to develop his knight to f4 and bishop to e2. I'm not amazingly excited by that plan, but look how directly and aggressively Botvinnik hones in on its weak points. **11...♖e8** Stopping 12.♘f4 due to 12...♕xf4. **12.♘g3 g6** No general developing moves. Black is targeting the knight on g3 immediately.

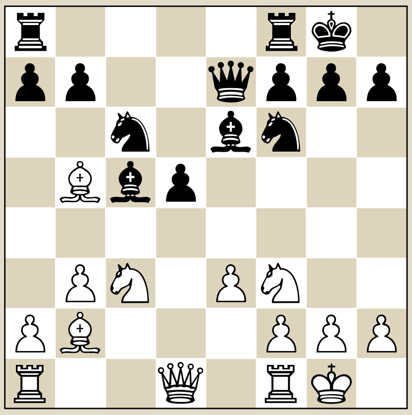


13.f3 White was probably not happy with a line like 13.♗d3 h5 14.h3 h4 15.♘e2 ♘d7 followed by bringing the knight to e6 and later g5. The weakness of White's kingside structure is a little annoying for White. **13...h5 14.♗e2 ♘d7 15.♔f2 h4 16.♘f1 ♘f8 17.♘d2 ♖e7 18.♖he1 ♗f5 19.h3 ♖ae8 20.♘f1 ♘e6** and Black already had a big advantage which he finished off with a flourish 20 moves later.

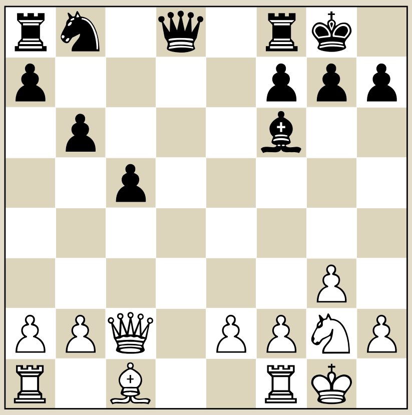
Botvinnik was so good at this: structurally clear positions in which he could use his attention to detail (spotting the – by no means obvious - vulnerability of the white knight on g3) and his passion for concrete play (attacking the knight immediately with three pawn moves before developing his queenside) to deploy his pieces quickly and aggressively. Once he got going, resistance was futile!

So how much of a psychological impact did the game have? In the immediate term, a lot: Petrosian's play in the second game was extremely shaky and he could easily have lost it. In the long-term though, this game was perhaps the key to Petrosian's success in the match. It seemed to encourage him to take a completely different approach to the white pieces.

In all the subsequent White games, Petrosian switched to much stodgier openings like the Queen's Indian and 1.c4. The difference was astonishing. In two games with Black, Botvinnik still managed to get a clearly defined type of position:

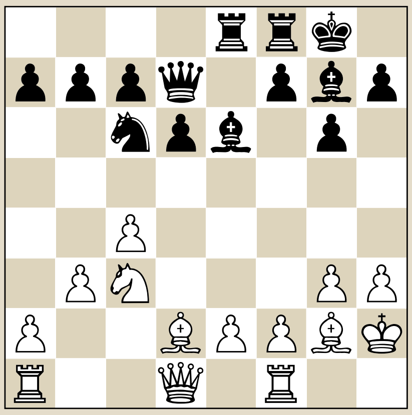


Petrosian-Botvinnik
Moscow 1963, 11th match game
position after 11...♕e7

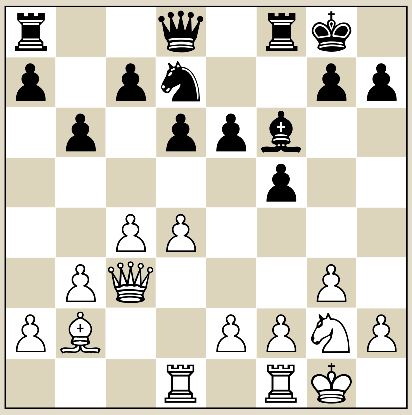


Petrosian-Botvinnik
Moscow 1963, 13th match game
position after 14...c5

In both games Petrosian was played off the board and had to hang on desperately for the draw. However, when he managed to get Botvinnik to manoeuvre behind the lines, Botvinnik got into a dreadful mess.



Petrosian-Botvinnik
Moscow 1963, 7th match game
position after 13...♖ae8



Petrosian-Botvinnik
Moscow 1963, 19th match game
position after 14.♘xg2

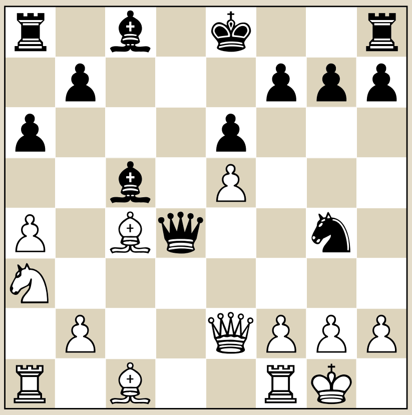
In those games, Botvinnik's play seems almost old-fashioned. You'd almost think he was a player from the 1910s transported into the future. The fighting spirit is all there but he can't seem to put together any plan and his positions end up looking so ugly!

In his article 'Why did I lose the match?' Botvinnik complains that his play lacked 'creative harmony'. He speculates that '[...] Perhaps this is explained by the characteristics of Petrosian's style. [...] Petrosian, to sum him up, emphasizes the supreme importance of defence in chess. Imagine that a computer already plays at the strength of a grandmaster: it calculates the variations and comes to the conclusion that there are two equally good moves available. Which will the machine choose? That does not depend on the machine itself but on the programmer. Petrosian programmed himself for such situations a long time ago – he chooses the defensive variation, whether most other grandmasters in such a position would prefer the attacking continuation. [...] So perhaps it is true that Petrosian's rather unusual way of playing had its effect on me and deprived me of my usual creative harmony.'

On the other hand, Botvinnik only lost the black games 7-4. The massive difference was that Petrosian managed to maintain parity with Black 5½-5½ and a great deal of this was due to seven draws (!) in the Queen's Gambit Accepted. Looking at the games, this was a quite astonishing result. He could easily have expected to lose two or possibly three of those games. Perhaps the most puzzling of these was the 8th game, where Botvinnik introduced an excellent novelty:

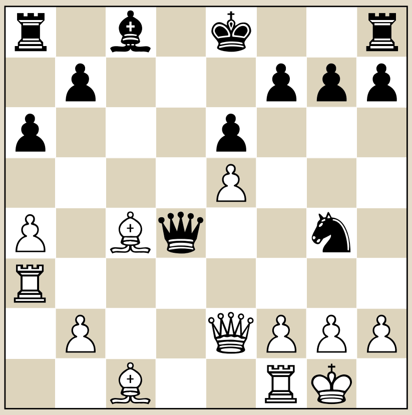
QG 9.1 – D27
Mikhail Botvinnik
Tigran Petrosian
Moscow 1963 (8th match game)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e3 e6 5.♗xc4 c5 6.0-0 a6 7.a4 ♘c6 8.♕e2 ♗e7 9.dxc5 ♗xc5 10.e4 ♘g4 11.e5 11.♗f4 ♕f6 was fine for Black in the 6th game. **11...♘d4 12.♘xd4 ♕xd4 13.♘a3!**



This was Botvinnik's new idea, and it's very strong. 14.♘c2 is the immediate threat, winning the knight on g4. Here Petrosian thought for a long time. In fact, his choice is more or less forced as pretty much anything else loses material.

13...♗xa3! 13...♘xe5?! 14.♗e3 ♕d6 15.♗b5+ (even stronger than Botvinnik's 15.♖fd1) 15...♘d7 (15...axb5 16.♘xb5) 16.♖fd1 is awful for Black.
14.♖xa3



14...♘xe5 This was one of the big moments in the match. I imagine that Botvinnik was feeling a bit fragile at this point in the match. He had just lost two straight games with Black, and the very poor 7th game was fresh in his mind. In the end, feeling dissatisfied with his prepared move, Botvinnik spent 45 minutes considering his options before eventually plumping for his preparation. This feeling of having wasted his home analysis affected Botvinnik throughout the rest of the game. In his analysis, Botvinnik seems

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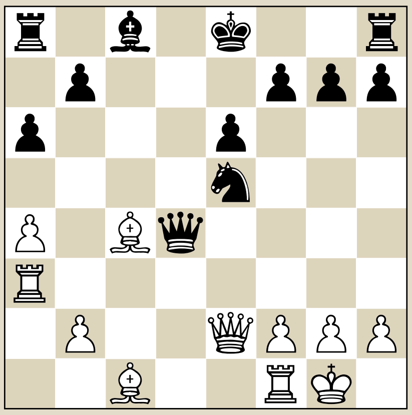
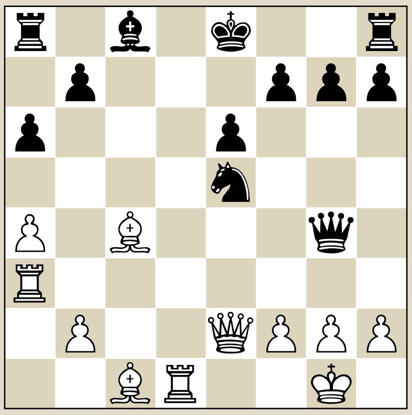
a little confused about the position: 'Aronin suggested after 15.♖d1 ♕g4 playing 16.♕d2 0-0 17.♗e2, Keres proposed 15.♗a2 and Matanovic 15.♖c3 0-0 16.♖d1. But would any of these have given White a clear advantage?' To be honest I share his confusion! With the black queen and knight hanging in the middle of the board, the uncastled black king, the undeveloped queenside and those terrible dark squares, you would think that White should be able to crash through somehow. It's not that simple though: Black has enough one-move attacks to keep the white pieces at bay temporarily. This gives him just enough time to avoid an immediate disaster.



15.b3 Botvinnik's sneaky prepared move runs into some great computer-style defence.

After lots of analysis, and some help from my friendly neighbourhood computer, it seems that this is the right way to approach things: 15.♖d1 ♕g4 (15...♕xc4 16.♕xe5 0-0 17.♗h6 ♕g4 18.♖ad3 is massive. White has the threat of ♗xg7, and the bishop on h6 is immune due to ♖g3):



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) 16.♕c2 was Botvinnik's idea after the game: 16...0-0 (16...♕xc4 17.♖c3; 16...♘xc4 17.♖g3 ♕h5 18.♖g5 ♕h4 19.♖xg7 with the threat of 20.♗g5 (Botvinnik) also looks strong) 17.♗e2 ♕f5 18.♕c7 Botvinnik claimed a winning advantage here, but it seems that simply 18...♘c6 followed by ...e5 and ...♘d4 will give Black decent chances of survival.

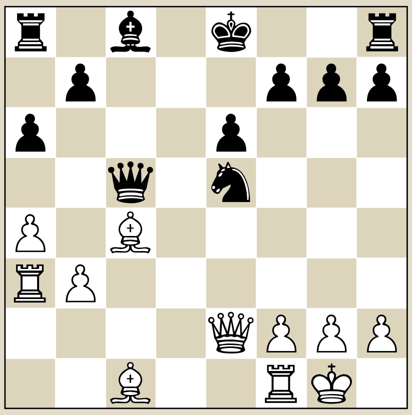
Botvinnik complains that his play lacked 'creative harmony'. He speculates that perhaps this is explained by the characteristics of Petrosian's style.

B) 16.♕d2 0-0 17.♗e2. This is actually the same idea as Botvinnik's, but by putting the queen on a dark square White avoids any one-move attacks on his queen by Black's queen. That means that White's next move can bring a fresh piece into the attack. Black's problem now is to decide where to put his queen. Maybe it doesn't matter where: it will get attacked wherever it goes! The most important consideration is not to lose a piece. The rest is just luck! If Black does have a plan, then it involves getting the knight out of the way and playing ...e5. It's just not that easy, whichever way Black chooses! 17...♕f5 18.b4. The computer way. I wanted to get the a3-rook over to the kingside and play b3 (to keep the possibility of ♗a3) but this is possibly even stronger. 18...f6 (18...♘c6 19.b5 – the point!; 18...♘g6 19.♖f3 ♕e4 20.♖e3 ♕f5 21.b5) 19.h3 (again a computer suggestion. ...♗g4 is going to be very awkward when the knight moves back from e5 due to weakness of e6. That's yet another obstacle to getting the bishop on c8 developed) 19...b6 20.f4 ♘f7 21.♗g4 ♕g6 22.♕e2, with a very dangerous initiative. That's not too easy to get right with White. There's a mixture of direct attacks on the queen and prophylactic play (b4, h3) required to keep Black bottled up.

15...♕c5!

Typical computer-style defence, avoiding immediate disaster by just bringing pieces out of the range of a threatened attack.

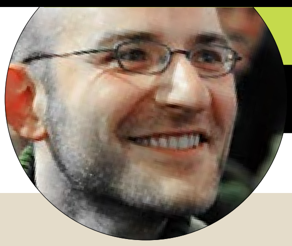
15...♘xc4 16.bxc4 0-0 17.♖d1 ♕c5 18.♖g3 is appalling for Black.

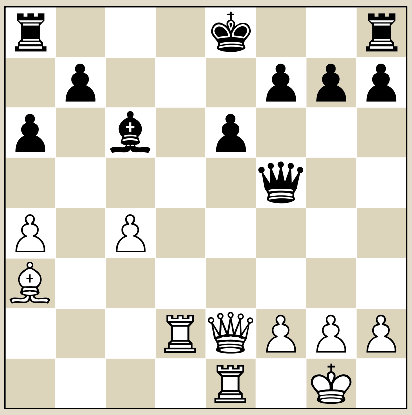


16.♖a2?!

16.♗b2 was Botvinnik's suggestion after the game: 16...f6 17.♕h5+ g6 18.♕h6 (18.♕h4 0-0 – compare this position to the variations after 15.♖d1 ♕g4 16.♕d2 0-0 17.♗e2: the rook on a3 can't get into the game!), with a clear advantage according to Botvinnik. It doesn't seem that clear though. 18...♘xc4 19.bxc4 e5 (the queen on c5 stops f4, so Black has a little time to get himself organized. ...♗e6 followed even by ...0-0-0 is a possibility) 20.♕g7 ♕f8 21.♕c7 ♕e7 is amazing but true. It looks like Black is surviving again.

16...♘xc4 17.bxc4 ♗d7 18.♗a3 ♕f5 19.♖d2 Threatening 20.♖d5. **19...♗c6** 19...0-0-0?! 20.♗e7 ♖de8 21.♗d6 is too dangerous. The black king is very exposed on the dark squares there. **20.♖e1**

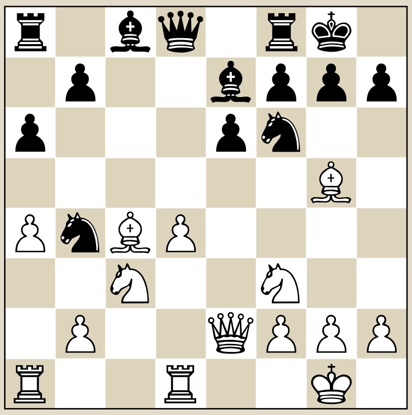




20...h5! Another great defensive move! 20...f6 21.g4! ♕e5 22.♕d1. **21.♕e3!? f6!** 21...♖h6 22.♖d5 ♗xd5 23.♕c5 is unexpectedly dangerous. **22.♕xe6+ ♕xe6 23.♖xe6+ ♔f7** and Petrosian had a little edge with which he tortured Botvinnik for another 30 moves.

It's seeing games like that that makes you realize how difficult it was for Botvinnik to play against Petrosian. Petrosian showed such fantastic nerves: he reacted properly to a big novelty, then kept his king in the centre, spurning a number of chances to put it 'safe' on the kingside or queenside and then went on and nearly beat Botvinnik in the ending. I don't think that any modern player (human or silicon) could have defended it better than he did.

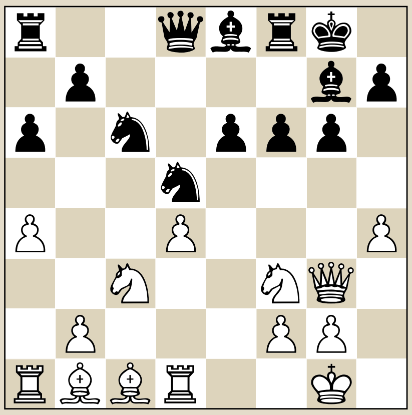
In fact, if you look at how Petrosian played the QGA in this match, you really feel that he won the match despite it rather than because of it. In the IQP positions, he also broke two of the key rules for playing these positions. In one of the games, he allowed the powerful break d4-d5:



Botvinnik-Petrosian
Game10, position after 12.♗g5

After **12...♗d7 13.d5!** won a pawn by force, although Petrosian held the draw (of course): **13...exd5 14.♘xd5 ♘bxd5 15.♗xd5 ♘xd5 16.♖xd5 ♗xg5 17.♘xg5 h6 18.♕d2 hxg5 19.♖xd7 ♕f6 20.♖xb7 ♖ad8**

Secondly, he accepted an IQP of his own in two positions when there really didn't seem any need for it. One was kind of OK, the other very bad:



Botvinnik-Petrosian
Game 16, position after 19...f6

20.♘xd5 exd5 20...♕xd5 21.♗a2 ♕d7 was much better, as 22.d5 ♘b4 is good for Black. **21.h5 ♘e7 22.hxg6 ♗xg6 23.♘h4 ♗xb1 24.♖xb1**, with a big advantage for White.

Moving into the middle phase, the match was so close! Botvinnik won a textbook QGD in the 14th game. It was then that Petrosian showed the real class of a top champion: he played a sharp 5.♕b3 Grünfeld in the very next game and won a glorious ending in his inimitable style. Match over… No! In the 16th game, Botvinnik had a winning position in a QGA after a really well-played game, but failed and only drew. If he'd won that game, he would have been level again…

But in the 18th and 19th games, Botvinnik got completely bogged down in slow manoeuvring games and both times ended up losing. After that he was in essence a broken man: the match finished bizarrely with three short draws.

This book, read together with *My Great Predecessors* (Volume II) has been one of my most enjoyable recent reading experiences. Kasparov is a great guide to get you into the flow of a match, and once you have that, the games become instantly more instructive and appealing. You start to understand better why openings are chosen, and you start to grasp how the styles of both players influence the course of the match. I especially liked Botvinnik's annotations. I'm really keen now to get on and take a look at the Botvinnik-Smyslov matches! I'm just wondering what Carlsen-Anand has in store for us. Let's hope we'll be talking about it in 50 years' time just like this match! ■

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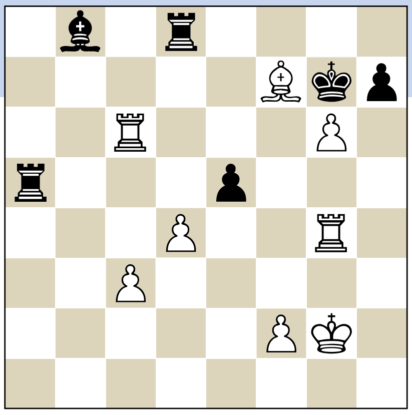
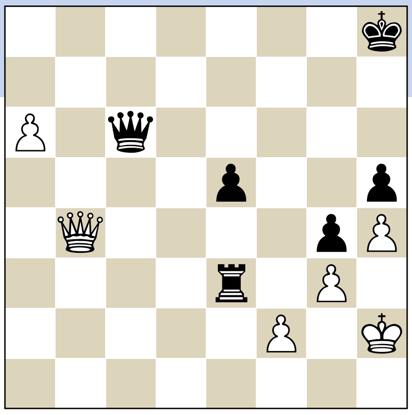
Beware: Brilliancy! Solutions of page 53



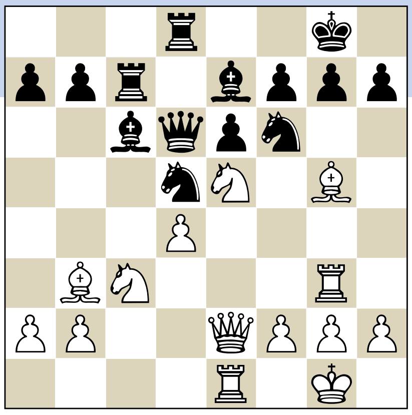
Sutovsky-Bok
Rhodes 2013 (2)

Even in time-trouble Emil Sutovsky should not have failed to spot the immediate 36.gxh7+! ♔xf7 37.♖f6+! ♔xf6 38.♖g8 and game over.



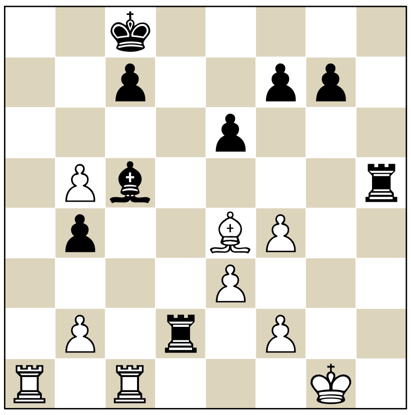
Girya-Chelushkina
Rhodes 2013 (3)

61.a7! was decisive in view of 61...♖f3 62.♕b8+ ♔g7 63.a8♕ ♖xf2+ 64.♔g1 ♖g2+ 65.♔f1 ♕xa8 66.♕xa8 ♖xg3 67.♕e8 ♖f3+ 68.♔g2 ♖f5 69.♕e6 and the black 'fortress' falls apart.



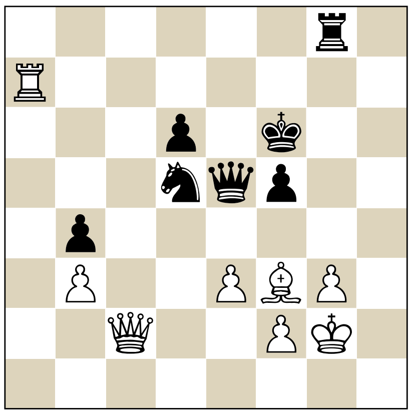
Volke-Lendwai
Rhodes 2013 (6)

Here the paradoxical 19.♗xd5! is tremendously strong: both 19...♗xd5 20.♘b5 and 19...exd5 20.♗f4 win material, while 19...♘xd5 20.♘e4 ♕b4 21.♗d2! ♕b6 22.♖xg7+! ♔xg7 23.♕g4+ ♔f8 24.♗h6+ ♔e8 25.♕g8+ wins the house.



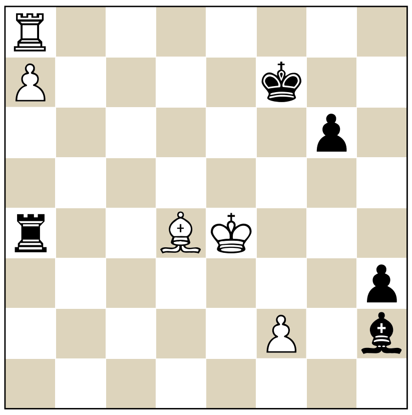
Radjabov-Rapport
Rhodes 2013 (4)

White could actually block the king's flight by 32.f5! ♗b6 (not 32...exf5 33.♖xc5) 33.♗c6! ♔d8 34.f6!! gxf6 35.♖a8+ ♔e7 36.♖e8+ ♔d6 37.♖d8+ ♔e7 38.♖xd2 and wins.



Riazantsev-Rasulov
Rhodes 2013 (5)

The more active and imaginative 51.♕c6! would have done the trick, when after 51...♘xe3+ 52.fxe3 ♕xg3+ 53.♔f1 ♖c8! White has the hidden counterblow 54.♖f7+! ♔xf7 55.♗d5+ ♔f6 56.♕xc8 and wins.



Pogonina-Cmilyte
Rhodes 2013 (2)

The bishop is much more effective on the longer diagonal: 42...♗d6! 43.♖h8 h2 44.♔f3 ♔e6! 45.♔g2 ♔d5 46.f3 (46.♗e3 ♖g4+ 47.♔f3 ♖a4 48.♔g2 ♖g4+, draw) 46...♖a2+ 47.♗f2 ♗c5 48.a8♕+ ♖xa8 49.♖xa8 ♗xf2 50.♖g8 ♗g3 51.♖xg6 ♗f4, with a draw.

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Just Checking

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Tania Sachdev

CURRENT ELO: 2441
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PLACE OF BIRTH: New Delhi, India
PLACE OF RESIDENCE: New Delhi, India

What is your favourite colour?
Red.

What kind of food makes you happy?
Italian and anything super spicy.

And what drink?
Hot chocolate.

What was the best book you ever read?
A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini, *Harry Potter* by J.K. Rowling, *My Sister's Keeper* by Jodi Picoult, *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie, *Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien.

What is your all-time favourite movie?
Love Actually, *Departed*, *Fight Club*, and anything with Ryan Gosling in it.

What is your favourite TV series?
The Big Bang Theory.

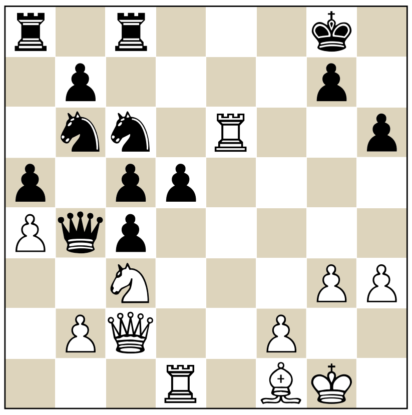
Do you have a favourite actor?
Leonardo DiCaprio.

And a favourite actress?
Audrey Hepburn.

What music do you like to listen to?
I like everything by The XX, Hip hop, Indie and R&B.

What was your best result ever?
Winning the Asian Women's Championship in 2007, Wijk aan Zee 2011, 6½/13 in Group C, and Istanbul Olympiad 2012, bronze medal Board 3 (9/11). These were good. Hopefully the best is yet to come!

What was the best game you ever played?
Sachdev-Swathi, Indian Championship, 2011:
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.g3 dxc4 6.♗g2 ♘bd7 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.e4 0-0 9.♖e1 h6 10.♗f4 ♖e8 11.a4 a5 12.♕c2 ♘b6 13.♖ad1 ♗b4 14.♗f1 ♕e7 15.h3 ♘fd7 16.♗c7 ♗d6 17.♗xd6 ♕xd6 18.e5 ♕b4 19.♘d2 ♖f8 20.♘de4 c5 21.♘d6 ♘b8 22.d5 exd5 23.♘xc8 ♖xc8 24.e6 fxe6 25.♖xe6 ♘c6



26.♖xh6 ♘e7 27.♖e1 ♖c7 28.♕h7+ ♔f7 29.♖ee6 ♘bc8 30.♖hf6+ ♔e8 31.♕xg7 1-0

Who is your favourite chess player of all time?
Bobby Fischer.

Is there a chess book that had a profound influence on you?
Garry Kasparov's *My Great Predecessors* Volumes 1 and 4.

What was the most exciting chess game you ever saw?
Short-Timman, Tilburg 1991, is one of the coolest games ever.

What is the best chess country in the world?
Russia.

What are chess players particularly good at (except for chess)?
Putting on weight.

Do chess players have typical shortcomings?
Over-analysing everything. It's an occupational hazard.

What do you appreciate most in a person?
Honesty and good cooking skills.

What is it that you dislike in a person?
Dishonesty and spite.

Which three people would you like to invite for dinner?
Ellen DeGeneres, Malala Yousafzai and Drake.

What is the best piece of advice you were ever given?
When in doubt have a hot chocolate.

Is there something you'd love to learn?
Fluent Spanish.

What's your favourite place in the world?
Barcelona and Home.

What would you save from your house if it were on fire?
If everyone else is safe then my phone.

How do you relax?
Good food and a movie in bed.

If you could change one thing in the chess world, what would it be?
Higher prize-money for women.

Is a knowledge of chess useful in everyday life?
Not if you want to be well loved ☺.

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World Championship Match - Game 10
World Championship Match - Game 9
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02:36
02:35
rated 3-minute 3/0
GM Alex Yermolinsky
00:00:00

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